



The home of professionals working in the
DOMESTIC FLOORING TRADE



NICF GUIDE TO DOMESTIC FLOORING



Third Edition



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WORKING IN A KNEELING POSITION?

KNEE AND BACK PROBLEMS CAN BE PREVENTED BY WEARING GOOD KNEE PROTECTORS, AS THESE OFFER THE RIGHT SUPPORT FOR YOUR ACTIVITIES.

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YOU CAN ALSO CHECK OUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

WANT TO BECOME AN OFFICIAL FENTO DEALER?

Please send an e-mail to help@fentokneeProtection.co.uk or call us at **01452 727300**

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CONTACT US

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 Unit 22 Eldon Business Park, Eldon Road, Chilwell, Nottingham, NG9 6DZ



IG: thenicf
FB: National institute of carpet and floorlayers
X: Follow us @thenicf

Welcome to the third edition of the NICF Guide to Domestic Flooring, revised by flooring consultant, Richard Renouf, with advice and support from NICF Council members. It aims to provide the latest information and advice required for a domestic flooring installation.

AIMS OF THE NICF

The NICF is the home of professionals working in the domestic flooring trade. It is a highly respected organisation within the domestic flooring industry and is active in promoting the **skilled floorlayer**. The NICF's stated aims are to:

- Promote excellence and ethical practice within the field of domestic installations of carpet, laminate, luxury vinyl tile flooring, naturals, sheet vinyl and wood.
- Promote understanding and awareness of the British Standards Codes of Practice for the installation of floorcoverings.
- Promote assurance of quality of workmanship to the general public.

The NICF provides advice and resources for the professional floorlayer to help make running a business as simple, profitable and stress-free as possible.

ABOUT THE NICF

Formed originally in 1979 as the National Institute of Carpet Fitters, the NICF Council rebranded in 1998 to the current name of National Institute of Carpet and Floorlayers. This was in recognition of the changing landscape of the domestic flooring market, acknowledging not only those members who were multi-skilled, but allowing fitters of sheet vinyls, luxury vinyl tile, laminate and wood flooring to be members of the Institute for the first time.

The NICF is headed by an elected Council which meets four times a year to review the policies, finances and any other matters relating to governance of the Institute.

The NICF actively promotes skills within the domestic fitting arena and hosts the hugely popular annual *Fitter of the Year* competition, which is a well-respected industry award. The competition alternates every two years between Carpet and LVT.

As part of NICF's aim to promote excellence within the domestic flooring sector, it was a co-founder of FITA (see page 14) along with the CFA (Contract Flooring Association).



BELOW: Matt Bowles, winner of the Fitter of The Year Competition (LVT) in 2021



BELOW: Dan Evans, winner of the Fitter of The Year Competition (Carpet) in 2022



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STOPGAP 1600 is the reliable solution for encapsulating electric and water-fed underfloor heating systems. It is fibre-reinforced, fast drying and suitable for applications from 3mm to 40mm. Ideal for new build or refurbishment projects and backed by the F. Ball product guarantee. Find out more at [f-ball.com/1600](https://www.f-ball.com/1600)



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Kelmore is a UK based manufacturer of high-quality preparation products for the flooring industry. Kelmore's comprehensive product range, designed for use on a plethora of backgrounds and subfloors in both domestic and commercial settings, offers the installer effective solutions to meet the specific requirements and challenges of any job.

Always mindful of the environment and looking to reduce our CO₂ emissions wherever possible, we manufacture to the highest of standards using unique technologies, extensive knowledge, and outstanding raw materials. Our state of the art, automated machinery, coupled with meticulous quality control procedures, ensures that the products are of a high standard, consistent and plentiful.

more nger Bonds



Priding ourselves on doing all we can to help your business, we will continuously strive to exceed your demands and expectations. Our customer service and after sales support, which is enhanced by having a dedicated technical support team, are easily contactable and there when you need them.



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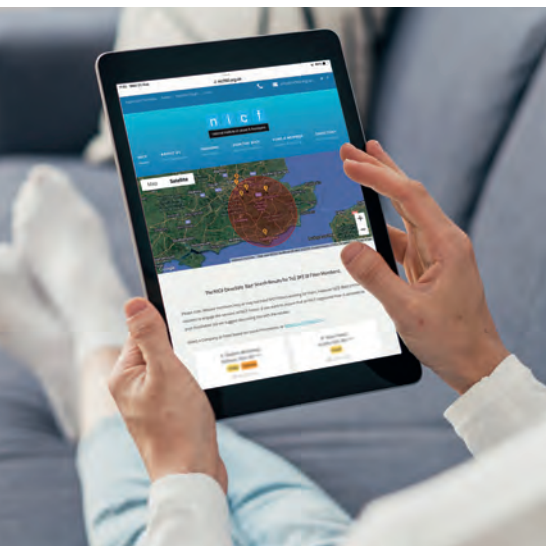
Flooring is a major element in any home and with more products to choose from than ever before, selecting the right installer has never been so important. The correct installation of such an important part of your home is vital to achieve the look that you want. Correct installation also ensures your flooring will be as hard-wearing as the manufacturer intended.

By using a NICF member to install your new flooring, you can be confident you are using an experienced, reputable and reliable professional.

INDEPENDENT INSPECTION SERVICE

The NICF offers an independent inspection service in the unlikely event that you have a complaint on a flooring installation undertaken by a NICF member. Inspectors can also carry out independent inspections and reports relating to installations by non-members.

For further information, please call the NICF administration office on 0115 958 3077.



FIND A FITTER DIRECTORY

Finding a suitable professional installer is incredibly easy with our "Find a Fitter" directory, which removes all the guesswork for you.

Visit www.nicftd.org.uk and go to "FIND A MEMBER" at the top, and then easily search by your location and the flooring type you want to install, within a specified radius.

Search results display the Fitter Level achieved by each installer, for the flooring type they install. Levels are colour coded for identification purposes, with Master Fitter being the highest Level that can be reached.

Installers must provide three references and pass an exam to become NICF Fitter Members. Further assessments allow the installer to use the Accredited Fitter or Master Fitter title. The three Fitter levels are as follows:

Fitter

The Fitter category is for members who are actively involved with fitting the flooring type specified, but who have not been assessed.

Accredited

Accredited Fitters will also have successfully completed an intermediate level of assessment of their work on-site, and this also includes customer feedback.

Master

Master Fitters are those who have reached an advanced level of competence and who will also have successfully completed a practical assessment at the FITA training centre.

Dedicated support for your business

TradeChoice Carpet & Flooring are fully committed to supporting independent carpet retailers. That is why we have introduced - The Retail Partner Programme: a strong, commercially focused support package for your business.



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The NICF supports floorlayers, manufacturers and suppliers of all types of domestic flooring, which include Carpet, Laminate, LVT, Naturals, Sheet Vinyl and Timber.

Some of the UK's largest and best-known flooring manufacturers are NICF Patron members. Whatever your involvement is within the domestic flooring industry, there is an NICF membership to suit.

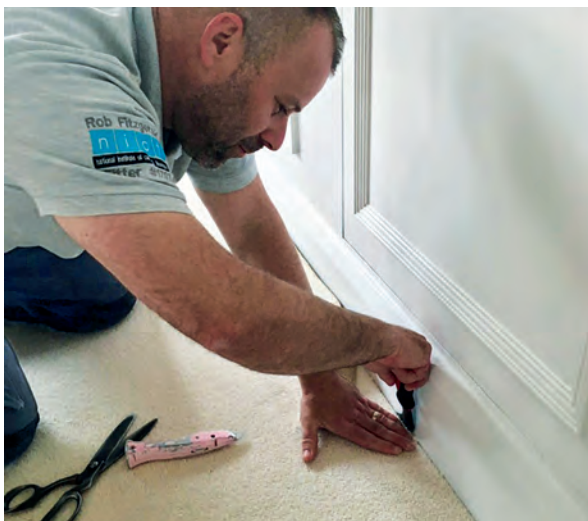
As an individual practising floorlayer, we offer four membership categories: **Trainee Fitter, Fitter, Accredited Fitter and Master Fitter** – all depending on your level of competence and skill.

If you are a professional domestic floorlayer, committed to providing the highest standard of installation and top quality customer service – then we want to hear from you!

Choose from seven types of NICF membership categories:

1. Trainee Fitter
2. Fitter
3. Accredited Fitter
4. Master Fitter
5. Retailer Member
6. Patron Member
7. Associate Member

Full membership category details and benefits can be found at www.nicfltd.org.uk or by calling 0115 958 3077.



MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- **Use of NICF logo** – to promote yourself as a quality flooring installer
- **FREE NICF website listing** – to help broaden work opportunities
- **FREE Technical Advice Help Line**
- **FREE Business Support Helpline** – provided by *Croner Consulting*
- **15% OFF FITA*** Standard Training Courses and one-day Workshops
- **DISCOUNTS** on tools and workwear
- **FREE** use of the *NICF Guide to Domestic Flooring*
- **FREE** annual magazine subscription to The Stocklists / CFJ

*Flooring Industry Training Association. NICF members automatically receive FITA membership (fita.co.uk).

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PROFESSIONAL FLOORING TRAINING

Qualifications, Training Courses & Workshops



WHO ARE FITA?

As part of NICF's aim to promote excellence within the domestic flooring sector, the NICF co-founded FITA (Flooring Industry Training Association), along with the CFA (Contract Flooring Association). FITA is an independent, not-for-profit specialist training organisation – by industry, for industry.

TRAINING CENTRES

Courses are run by seasoned professionals with specialist flooring industry knowledge from FITA's training centres at Loughborough and Kirkcaldy, both with fully equipped practical and lecture areas.

REGULAR COURSES & WORKSHOPS

Courses and workshops run regularly throughout the year and suit a range of skillsets from newcomers to the trade, as well as experienced fitters wishing to improve their skills.

APPRENTICESHIPS

FITA also offers a 95-100% funded floorlaying apprenticeship available at FITA Loughborough for prospective employers. The Floorlaying apprenticeship has no age limit and employers may also be able to access additional grants for employing apprentices and they can even gain support in advertising, interviewing and recruiting apprentices too.

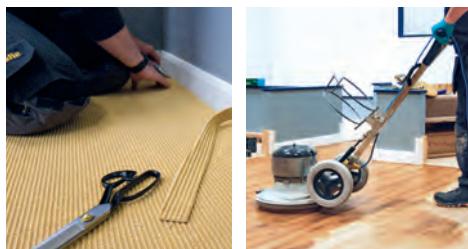
SHORT COURSES 1-4 DAYS

For Domestic & Commercial Fitters

- CARPET
- LUXURY VINYL TILE
- VINYL & WETROOMS
- SUBFLOOR PREP
- WOOD SANDING & FINISHING
- ESTIMATING & SURVEYING
- MOISTURE
- MANUFACTURER COURSES



SCAN HERE
to read the
latest FITA
Course
Prospectus
online



LATEST SOFTWARE FEATURES

CARMAN POWERED E-COMMERCE WEBSITE AND B2B PORTAL

The Carman powered e-commerce website and B2B Portal offers an off-the-shelf framework, customised to your business, giving an affordable hassle-free solution for B2B and trade sales online.

Unlike regular E-commerce websites, with various components to consider like invoicing, integration into software packages, and the regular updates of product or service catalogs, these are all handled by our API and driven from Carman.

Live stock and inventory is shown, giving their customers a real-time view of what can be purchased and collected or dispatched the same day. You are not just limited to flooring, any item can be sold through the system in this way.

The Carman powered e-commerce website and B2B Portal is functional on all displays. Optimized for mobile phones, tablets, PCs, and laptops screens of all sizes.



CARMAN BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Carman Business Intelligence powered by Microsoft Power BI is an industry first, and we are very proud to have embarked on the joint project with the University of South Wales and its data scientists.

Combine your existing Carman data with the Carman Business Intelligence package to stay ahead of the competition and drive digital transformation, enabling the analysis of your Enterprise data for in-depth data visualisation and reporting.

Additional features include access to sales and cost analysis data such as heat maps displaying average sales value, products, trends, and the total value of sales within a chosen postcode area. Carman Business Intelligence reports can be refreshed daily, or even hourly.

With Carman Business Intelligence, our customers can gain a comprehensive view of their organisation's data and translate it into insights about their processes, this foresight can enable improved and strategic business decisions.

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Carman internal diary with IOS/Android Carman Companion integration

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Access to Carman Stock Manager & Stock Movements

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ERP

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We asked NICF fitters for their opinions on how they felt that NICF membership benefitted them in their daily work lives. Below is a selection of feedback we would like to share.



I originally joined the NICF mainly to continue my progression within the industry. I've now come to realise how fantastic this decision was. Not only have I progressed to Master Fitter in Carpets, but I have also taken full advantage of so many of the fantastic offers and discounts that come with membership. I would highly recommend to any flooring installer within the industry looking to take the next step in their career."

Rhys Ivemey
Master Fitter



Being a member of the NICF has had massive benefits for myself and the progression of my business. The NICF logo acts as a sign of assurance for potential customers, but also gives me a network of installers I can engage with when needed. Add to that, the discounts obtained through membership and it's really an easy decision to take the step to become a member."

Jason Draper
Master Fitter



I joined the NICF four years ago as I wanted to instil confidence in my customers that I was willing to invest in my company which in turn, has made them more confident to invest in me. By joining the institution, it opens up many more benefits as well, if you choose to use them, like the discounts on tools and advice from other like-minded professionals. If we don't invest ourselves, why should we expect others to?"

Brett Warren
Master Fitter



I've been in the flooring industry all my life (54 years), and I can honestly say these last few years have been made easier by being an NICF member, knowing that I have the backing and support from like-minded people, who have the skills and ability to help me through the difficulties and help my business be more professional, with great training and legal support."

James Parfitt
Fitter



I joined the NICF in 2020 when I set up my own business. I liked the idea of being part of a flooring body which promotes excellence within the flooring industry and it's important for me to stay up-to-date with industry standards and also offer my customers assurances of the quality of my workmanship. I have also benefitted from discounted training courses for me and my team and discounts on tools."

Dean Dickinson
Master Fitter



I have been a member of the NICF since 2018 and, in those years since joining, I have met some really good people who are always willing to help out and give good sound advice.

Along with the work that I get from the directory listing, it would be crazy for me not to have membership. This trade needs the NICF."

Richard Long
Master Fitter

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- 3 Birch Distribution (Branch)
Hull HU7 0XD -- T. 01482 826 654
- 4 Birch Distribution (HQ)
Sheffield S9 5PH -- T. 0114 243 1230

North East & West

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Stockport SK6 2BH -- T. 0161 406 7557

Midlands East & West

- 6 T & R Floor Covering Distributors Ltd
Nottingham NG9 1PF -- T. 0115 925 7711
- 7 Capitol Flooring Supplies Ltd
Coventry CV6 5PY -- T. 02476 689 020
- 8 DMS Flooring Supplies (Branch)
Northampton NN4 7BD -- T. 01604 664 859
- 9 B L Flooring Supplies Ltd (Branch)
Gloucester GL3 4AQ -- T. 01452 223 355

Isle of Man

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East Anglia

- 11 STS Flooring Distributors Ltd (Branch)
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- 12 Flooring Supplies Anglia Ltd
Norwich NR6 5DR -- T. 01603 427 247
- 13 PFC Flooring Supplies Ltd (Branch)
Ely CB6 2RL -- T. 01353 774863

South & South East

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- 15 STS Flooring Distributors Ltd (Branch)
Basildon SS14 3DW -- T. 0345 899 1000
- 16 Nutland Carpet Accessories Ltd (HQ)
Eastleigh SO53 4HZ -- T. 02380 267 322
- 17 Garrod Bros. (London) Ltd
Enfield EN3 7SY -- T. 02088 056 767
- 18 PFC Flooring Supplies Ltd
Romford RM3 8TS -- T. 01708 378 801
- 19 DMS Flooring Supplies (Branch)
Hemel Hempstead HP2 7EP -- T. 01604 664 859

South West

- 20 B L Flooring Supplies Ltd
Bristol BS2 9SH -- T. 0117 955 5454
- 21 Beach Brothers Ltd
Exeter EX4 1EQ -- T. 01392 421 000
- 22 Nutland Carpet Accessories Ltd (Branch)
Poole BH17 0UJ -- T. 01202 681 929

London

- 23 STS Flooring Distributors Ltd (Branch)
Watford WD24 4YS -- T. 08454 342 000 Ltd
- 24 J. De Bruyn (Flooring Services)
Leyton E10 7DE -- T. 020 8558 4725
- 25 STS Flooring Distributors Ltd (Branch)
Croydon CR0 4XB -- T. 08454 341 000
- 26 STS Flooring Distributors Ltd (HQ)
Orpington BR5 3SS -- T. 08454 341 000



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One of the world's best known bulk mixers now has a new stockist in the north of England – The Witch Group of Altham in Lancashire.

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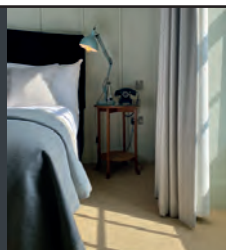
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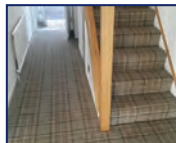
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But it wasn't an easy decision. After all, the staff at the flooring company were used to their traditional methods of doing things, and they weren't sure if investing in new technology would be worth it. They had heard horror stories about software programs that didn't live up to their promises, leaving companies worse off than when they started.

That's when they found Measure Square - an innovative platform designed specifically for professionals within the flooring industry. With its cutting-edge features such as measurement, estimation and project management tools, Measure Square offered exactly what they needed! Plus, there was no need to worry about costly mistakes or delays; thanks to uncompromising accuracy provided by this comprehensive suite of tools, every job would be completed on time and within budget without any worry of human error disrupting progress.

Within weeks after implementing Measure Square into their workflow process, the team at the flooring business noticed a dramatic improvement in efficiency and cost savings due to fewer mistakes made during measurements or estimations! Working smarter rather than harder has never been easier - say goodbye to manual errors once and for all with Measure Square today!

Measure Square is revolutionizing the flooring industry with its cutting-edge software that helps flooring professionals increase their accuracy and efficiency. Our unique platform provides a comprehensive suite of solutions for measuring, estimating, and managing projects to help professionals save time and money. With our mission to empower businesses of all sizes with superior precision tools, we strive to make the entire process easier from

concept to completion. Our vision is to eliminate manual error by becoming the go-to resource for professional flooring estimators around the world.

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Measure Square is a fully integrated system designed for the individual flooring business right up to national flooring chains conducting residential or commercial contract flooring sales and installations. A sophisticated yet simple software solution, Measure Square M8 Desktop and M2 Mobile estimation software and applications link directly to Measure Square CRM & JobTrakr Project Management software. Take control of your data and reduce mistakes from manual input and transfer from one disconnected software to another.

Measure Square focus on providing clear pathways, enabling all those invested in assessing how new technology will overcome bottlenecks, increase efficiency and create a partnership ensuring any investment in new technology keeps pace with ever changing needs of an industry now and in years to come. Change management is a critical part of any implementation of new tools and workflow processes. We provide a clear comparison between existing workflow process and tools and Measure Square's process and suite of tools.

GET THE 10000 FT VIEW OF YOUR PROJECT INSTANTLY WITH JOBTRAKR

JobTrakr is the latest addition to the Measure Square suite, put simply Job Tracker gives you a 10000 ft view of your project it enables users to track production, generate reports, and collaborate with team members in real-time. It is where your team save time and money. Create and share markups and take-offs, task and issue management resolution, photo's, videos, reports and much more. Leveraging MeasureSquare's Estimate data and floorplan take-offs, Job Tracker is a collaboration tool for field production tracking and reporting. Track jobsite productivity and accountability timely and accurately to avoid costly budget and schedule over-run, get paid faster with a professional completion

report. Run moisture testing and report correctly to eliminate liabilities professional tracking and reporting that saves hours of time fully integrated with Bluetooth reading transfer to avoid

human errors. Resolve jobsite issues faster through collaboration among PMs, field reps and subcontractors issue report and task assignments with site photo shared jobsite plan, product take-off data, and completion status views. Incentivise installer productivity with tracked daily completion quantities job report supported with diagrams and photos facilitate administrative and payroll audit. Web Services API to integrate with existing ERP/CRM system streamline your workflow through data integration API compatible with MeasureSquare database.

WHAT OUR CUSTOMER ARE SAYING:

Joe Martin, Sees Flooring Ltd
helps us be competitive within the flooring industry.

I am flooring estimator for Sees Flooring, and we have been using measure square for over 4 years. I recommend the software as it is very easy use and helps us provide accurate/quick quotations to our clients. It helps to calculate the amount of material required for each project and helps us be competitive within the flooring industry.

Riaan Kriek, Crew Contractors Ltd
I've only scraped the surface of what the software is capable of.

I've been using MeasureSquare for 4 years now. I work for a company who does ceramic tiling, laminate flooring and carpets. MS was easy to start using, has been saving me a lot of time, and the software support has been great!

The software saves time with little things like saving wall profiles and having products like underlay or adhesive or tile trims added to your tile/carpet measurement. So by dragging one product into your measured room/area it automatically calculates the amount of the product and add-ons to be used.

My overall productivity has increased a lot, mistakes have been reduced, and I think I've only scraped the surface of what the software is capable of.

Reece Watson, Contract Flooring & Interiors Ltd
We can measure a project in 75% less time.

Measure Square has completely changed the way we estimate work. We can measure a project in 75% less time which means we can spend more time with our clients! Our clients are always pleased to receive a drawing of exactly what was measured and what products our price is based on. Measure Square completely modernised the way we estimate work.





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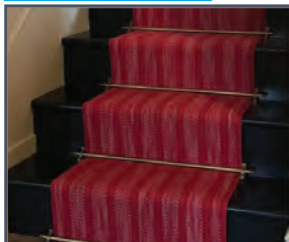
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Phil Worrall has 42 years industry experience as a trained carpet and floor-layer and flooring inspector; now specialising in LVT installation. NICF registered flooring inspector and Master Fitter.

Studied at Staffordshire University and obtained a degree in Law in 2015 to develop skills supporting his work in investigative inspection work and report writing for dispute resolution.

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BMK

BMK Flooring is a renowned nationwide Hard Flooring Specialist based in Leeds. With local Area Sales Managers spread across the country, we can deliver UK wide on a next day basis.

BMK Flooring was traditionally a wool carpet brand. However, recognising shifts in market trends towards more modern and contemporary hard flooring products the BMK brand started to change its focus.

BMK launched its new branding in 2022 and is highly regarded as a leading specialist in Engineered Wood, Laminate, LVT and SPC. Our engineered wood and laminate products fall under the 'Chene' brand and are well known for quality and value.

During 2023 a new and improved engineered wood offering has been launched that covers the most popular decors and finishes to further enhance our already strong reputation as a leader in quality and value. These are complemented by a selection of impressive display stands that are due to be revealed at the 2023 National Flooring Show in September. We have also launched an exclusive collection of laminate ranges across various specifications, including a 72-hour aqua resistant range with registered embossed finish.

In recent years BMK has also become a market leader in the UK supply of SPC products through our exclusive Firmfit range. Having had huge success with the Firmfit Original range, we launched three brand new ranges in Firmfit, Pre-grout, Encaustic Tile and the Silent collection late 2022.

The new Firmfit ranges are completely unique in today's market, not only do they encompass all the best elements of the original Firmfit products, they add larger planks and more herringbone options, along with a specially designed Nature trend finish for an even more realistic matt look and feel whilst keeping all of its 100% waterproof qualities.

These new launches are available on impressive toast rack stands that help to display them perfectly for customers to get the full effects of the range.

For more information, please contact
BMK Flooring on 0113 380 2800
or your local Area Sales Manager

For more information on Firmfit please visit
www.firmfitfloor.com



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Discover the perfect harmony between aesthetics, performance and sustainability backed by a lifetime guarantee. **

** Lifetime guarantee available on selected ranges TLC Floors are launching new state of the art stand sets for retailer showrooms at The National Flooring Show 2023. The stands will include, full display boards of every range/colour, interactive screens for the full buyer experience and sample chips available to take home for colour matching your beautiful new floor to your furniture.

See us at Harrogate Flooring Show 2023

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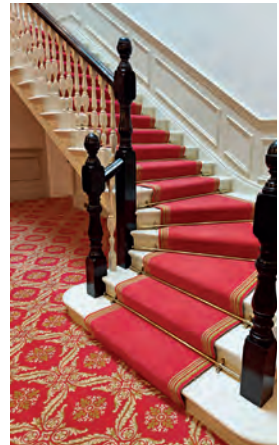
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Furni-glides are quick and easy to apply.

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Furni-glides move heavy items quickly

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overlapping the
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Step by Step

- 1 Clean the floor so no dirt gets scraped along.
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- 3 Self-adhesive Furni-glides: ideal on metal legs. In 24-hours the glue is set firm.



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GENERAL

Health and safety is important to all businesses, including the self-employed. It is important that you are aware of, and comply with, all your legal obligations, but it is also important that you think about your own and your customer's safety, to avoid any accidents or injuries, even where you may not have a legal obligation.

The legal requirements are found in *The Health and Safety at Work Act: 1974*, *The Consumer Protection Act: 1987* and the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations: 2002* and other related documents and guidance. These require all businesses to ensure the safety of all employees and others in the workplace by providing safe equipment, safe working practices and adequate information about any substance(s) which may constitute a risk to health or safety.

It is not possible in this guide to cover all the information in these documents, but the materials and tools used in floorlaying include hazardous chemicals, blades and power tools, and many potential hazards that could cause trips and falls when working in customers' premises. Full guidance is available at www.hse.gov.uk

Suppliers of any potentially hazardous products are responsible for providing information which is usually provided on packaging, although this may be summarised. Comprehensive safety and technical data sheets are available to download from manufacturers' websites and contain valuable information about product suitability, methods of application and what should be done in the event of spillages or accidents. It is vital to be familiar with this information as it not only helps you to work safely, but also ensures you use the products correctly.

All substances potentially hazardous to health should not be used until the risks of doing so have been assessed and the necessary precautions taken. The assessment must take into account all relevant factors such as the location in which the work is to be done, ventilation, quantities of materials to be used and the skill and knowledge of the operatives. The assessment must relate to a specific job and a generalised assessment is not sufficient. The risk assessment needs to be properly recorded and when the work is being done in commercial premises a copy may be required by the owner of the premises.

The work must then be carried out and controlled to ensure that anyone in the area is protected against any hazards presented by the materials to be used.

Some substances require specific first aid procedures in the event of skin or eye contact or ingestion. Adequate first aid provisions should be available quickly in case of an emergency.

Products are supplied in containers that provide the right protection to allow for transport and handling but the user must take care not to damage or compromise this protection. If any of the product is transferred to a different container, each new container must be labelled in line with the COSHH regulations.

PRECAUTIONS

- **Do not eat, drink or smoke in areas where hazardous products are used. Always wash your hands after using hazardous products and before eating or drinking.**
- **Avoid product contact with skin, mouth and eyes. Use protective gloves and protective**

barrier creams and, where splashing is a danger, protective goggles or glasses.

- Do not use solvents (e.g., white spirit) to clean your hands or other body parts
- Avoid inhalation of powders, dust and solvent vapours – use suitable respirators where necessary
- Accidental spillages must be dealt with appropriately and disposed of in accordance with both local and national regulations
- Individuals may be allergic to specific substances and where this is known, additional protection/precautions must be followed.
- If a rash or any other form of allergic reaction becomes apparent the affected person should stop using the product immediately and seek medical help. Severe allergic reactions can be fatal.
- Blades and power tools should only be used for the purposes they are intended and not be subjected to undue force. Blades and cutters should be disposed of carefully and not left carelessly on site where they could be misused or cause injury.

WATER-BASED ADHESIVES

These usually have a low degree of hazard but in some cases small amounts of solvent, ammonia, formaldehyde or other hazardous substances may be present. Any special precautions or safety requirements will be outlined in the product safety information.

VAPOURS FROM SOLVENTS

Solvent vapours are generally harmful when inhaled and can quickly cause nausea, headaches, dizziness and unconsciousness. In some cases, serious long-term effects may result. In order to reduce the exposure to vapours, ensure windows and doors are open and a through draught is blowing.

Ensure no pilot lights, naked flames, sparks, heating elements, or other means of ignition are in the vicinity of the work area.

RESIN BASED PRODUCTS

- Extreme care must be taken to prevent resins and hardeners coming into contact with skin and/or being inhaled. Always use appropriate PPE.
- Uncured resins and hardeners are harmful to the environment and must be disposed of carefully
- Strict attention must be paid to the manufacturer's instructions

CEMENT-BASED PRODUCTS

Inhalation of dust is a potential irritant and can cause very serious lung damage. Use dust masks, goggles and gloves and, if necessary, use respiratory equipment.

ASBESTOS

The HSE advises that around 5,000 workers are killed due to asbestos every year. It may take many years for asbestos-related illnesses to become apparent, but by this time they are almost always fatal. Asbestos can be present in any building built prior to 2000 and the highest risk for floorlayers is asbestos in old mineral floor tiles. Further details on recognising and dealing with asbestos can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/intro.htm

WORKWEAR AND PPE

A professional appearance is important, but is not the most important aspect to be considered when choosing workwear. The right choice of clothing provides protection against dust, adhesives, etc. Knee pads can help prevent knee damage and provide comfort, while pockets and other points of attachment help keep tools safely to hand whilst working.

A number of manufacturers offer workwear specifically designed for floorlayers. Trousers and tops are tailored to allow free movement, with pockets at the knees to allow a choice of kneepads to be inserted (and replaced when worn). Different combinations of pockets and additional tool pouches are available and there are lighter weight versions for warm weather.

Fabrics used to manufacture workwear are tested for durability and will last considerably longer than denim, as well as being more flexible and hence, more comfortable to wear.

TOOLS

Using the right tools for the job is vital to enable the job to be completed more quickly and to a higher standard and help avoid accidents which can be caused by using tools incorrectly.

Many floorlaying tools have blades incorporated into them. It is important to keep these sharp. Dull blades require more force and so increase the risk of injury and they do not cut cleanly, reducing the quality of your work.

Tools should be maintained properly and replaced where necessary. Electrical tools and extension leads should be regularly tested to ensure safe use. For domestic installations, the normal supply is at 230 volts but 110 volt tools can be used with a suitable transformer.

Section 14 (page 151) provides more information about tools that are helpful for installing different types of domestic flooring.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an important consideration at all stages of a flooring contract and should be made a priority when choosing flooring and flooring products, installing them, and disposing of any waste materials.

Choosing natural and sustainable products, or products where the manufacturer has used a good proportion of recycled materials is a good start, and many customers insist on checking these factors when selecting flooring. The impact on the environment will also be less when the product is UK / EU produced, as this reduces the impact of transportation. Effective estimating also prevents unnecessary waste.

Recycling schemes such as Recofloor™, help to reduce waste, and separating other waste materials into recyclable and non-recyclable

types will enable them to be disposed of in a way that helps maximise waste recovery.

All waste products must be disposed of in accordance with both local and national regulations. Transporting waste may require a Waste Carriers Licence, details of which can be obtained from your local authority.

Care must be taken when disposing of empty containers from flammable materials as a fire risk may still be present. With resinous products and cementitious materials, ensuring they are mixed and fully set before disposal can turn hazardous waste into non-hazardous material which can then be disposed of normally.

Blades and cutters should be disposed of in appropriate "sharps" boxes to avoid the possibility of injury to waste disposal operatives.

The following CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) pictograms are from the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) website:

www.hse.gov.uk/chemical-classification/labelling-packaging/hazard-symbols-hazard-pictograms.htm ■



HSE SYMBOLS: L-R, TOP TO BOTTOM

1. Explosive (exploding bomb)
2. Flammable (flame)
3. Oxidising (flame over circle)
4. Corrosive (corrosion)
5. Acute toxicity (skull and crossbones)
6. Hazardous to the environment (dead tree and fish)
7. Health hazard / Hazardous to the ozone layer (exclamation mark)
8. Serious health hazard (health hazard)
9. Gas under pressure (gas cylinder)

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Full details of the general data protection regulations can be found at:
www.ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/

Whether working directly for a customer or as a subcontractor, a flooring installer is trusted with information (data) relating to customers which could be misused.

It is the responsibility of the installer to ensure that customer information is held in confidence, securely, and protected from misuse by the installer and by any third party. Installers should be aware of, and comply with, the requirements of the *General Data Protection Regulations*.

For example, an installer should not:

- Leave any customer information on display (e.g., on the seat of a vehicle) where it might be seen by an unauthorised person
- Use the information they have been given for any purpose, other than the purpose for which they have been given the information. This includes, for example, using the information to contact the customer to solicit further private business after the work has been completed.
- Pass or disclose the information to any unauthorised third party
- Store the information for longer than is necessary to complete the work or comply with any legal obligation (e.g., for tax records)
- Store or dispose of the information carelessly or in a way which may allow unauthorised use of the information. ■

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It is best practice to always visit the property to assess the site and to measure, so that an accurate estimate can be worked out for all the materials and labour that will be required to complete the job to a satisfactory standard.

If this is not done or is simply viewed as a chance to take measurements, problems are likely to arise which cause additional costs and which delay the project, or which may even prevent the work from being completed.

Flooring and underlay products are supplied in sheet, roll and tile forms which means the amount of flooring required may be greater than the area(s) to be fitted. A good estimator will minimise wastage by carefully planning the installation and will consult with the customer about important factors, such as the placement of any seams or the alignment of patterns.

The width of roll products such as carpets and vinyl flooring have a tolerance of $\pm 1.25\%$. This can mean a roll is not as wide as the nominal

measurement and this difference can be up to 62.5 mm for a 5m-wide product and should be taken into account when planning.

While in the customer's home, the effective estimator will ensure that the chosen products are suitable for the home environment and use that they will receive. This will minimise the potential for complaints.

A good estimator will also check the condition of the subfloor for flatness, soundness, moisture and other relevant factors, so that all necessary subfloor preparation works are included in the quotation.

The words "estimate" and "quotation" are used interchangeably and there is little, if any, difference between them from a legal point of view. It should not be assumed that, by using the word "estimate" that a price can be increased, once work has commenced. ■

FITA (Flooring Industry Training Association) runs regular short courses in Effective Estimating for Domestic and Commercial estimators at both their training centres at Loughborough and Kirkcaldy. Visit www.fita.co.uk



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SUBFLOORS

A subfloor is the surface which flooring and floorcoverings are installed over, and should be in a suitable condition for the product to be used. In general, this means it must be dry, flat and smooth, with a sound surface, free from contamination, that does not flex excessively as you walk across it and is suitable for the fixing methods and products to be used.

If subfloors do not meet the necessary criteria for the new flooring, preparation work must be done to bring it up to the required standard.

TYPES

When fitting domestic flooring two main types of subfloor are most likely to be found:

1. Solid subfloors

Usually made from concrete (cement) or anhydrite (calcium sulphate/gypsum) based screeds, but asphalt and other substrates may be encountered.

Older buildings (pre-1970) may not have a structural DPM (damp-proof membrane) between the ground and the slab, so moisture from the ground can be present in the subfloor and so a new surface-applied DPM may be necessary, especially for wood-based and resilient floorcoverings.

It is vital to test all subfloors for their moisture content (**see page 48 onwards**). Modern building regulations require a solid subfloor to include insulation and, during the lifetime of this edition of the *NICF Guide to Domestic Flooring*, the regulations regarding insulation and heating will change for all new builds.

It is difficult to distinguish between cement and anhydrite subfloors just by looking at them, but it is vital to know the difference when applying some smoothing compounds and other preparation materials, as the floor-layer will need to ensure they are compatible with the subfloor surface.

The information can usually be obtained from the builder.

Anhydrite screeds started to be used from about 1990 onwards, so it is only more recent properties and extensions that might have anhydrite screeds.

2. Timber floors

Floorboards are fixed to joists to form a “suspended” floor, or particle board panels either fixed to joists or laid as a floating floor over insulation panels.

It is also common in domestic situations to be asked to lay new flooring over an existing flooring such as vinyl or quarry/ceramic tiles or parquet flooring. If this flooring is not suitable as a substrate for the new flooring either because of its type or condition, sub-floor preparation work will be required.

This may include removing the existing flooring completely or covering it with a suitable smoothing compound or hardboard/plywood interlayment.

All floors should be cleared of rubbish and vacuumed to remove all dust and debris.

FITA (Flooring Industry Training Association) runs regular short courses in Subfloor Preparation at their training centres at Loughborough and Kirkcaldy. **Visit www.fita.co.uk**



ABOVE: Tramex CME5 for instant, non-destructive and quantitative %MC moisture content testing of concrete and anhydrite floors and screeds; ambient temperature and relative humidity; Bluetooth connectivity to the Tramex Meters App. Visit www.tramexmeters.com

MOISTURE

All subfloors should be checked for moisture before flooring is installed. Some flooring products are affected by moisture and some flooring products will inhibit the passage of moisture from the subfloor into the atmosphere. Moisture can therefore cause expansion, discolouration and/or lifting of some flooring products.

Failing to check for moisture so that precautionary or preventative measures could be taken is the biggest cause of problems with resilient and timber-based flooring.

In a domestic project it is the flooring installer's responsibility to carry out moisture checks, the homeowner is unlikely to have the equipment or expertise to do this. Moisture readings should be taken before installing any flooring where moisture could cause a problem.

It is good practice for the flooring installer to keep records of the readings taken. If the moisture readings are too high the flooring should not be laid and the moisture issue should be dealt with before proceeding.

Modern building regulations require damp-proofing to be incorporated into all buildings at the design stage, but this has not always been the case. From the Victorian era onwards, a variety of materials were used to protect against moisture from the ground with varying levels of effectiveness.

Sheet DPMs (damp-proof membranes) were introduced in the 1960s and there have been a lot of changes to building regulations in recent years to improve insulation in subfloors and so floor construction is very diverse.

The appearance of the subfloor cannot be taken as any indication that the floor is dry or has damp-proof protection incorporated into it. Suspended subfloors, such as floorboards/chip-board etc., must also be checked for moisture.

For most floorcoverings, an RH reading of $\leq 75\%$ measured using a hygrometer, is suitably dry. This is the test method that is recommended by British Standards and it measures the humidity in a small volume of air above the subfloor surface, rather than in the subfloor itself.

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If, for example, a surface DPM has been applied to the subfloor, this method of measurement will still be accurate but other methods which measure the moisture in the subfloor would not be. However, with thick slabs it can take up to 72 hours for a hygrometer to stabilise and so this can be a time-consuming method of moisture measurement.

Other methods of moisture measurement are available and some devices give almost instant readings. As long as the limitations of these methods are taken into consideration they can be a useful indicator of the moisture content of a domestic floor. These methods generally measure the moisture in the subfloor rather than the moisture being released from the subfloor.

“Bound” moisture, such as moisture below an effective DPM or bound in the subfloor by rapid setting compounds, may still give a high reading whereas a hygrometer may not. Many of these measuring devices use their own scale of units which may not correlate directly with hygrometer readings.

New floors laid during building or refurbishment works need adequate time to dry. As a general

rule sand and cement screeds laid directly over a DPM take approximately one day for each mm of thickness for the first 50mm, followed by 1.5 days for each mm above this thickness under good drying conditions (20°C and 65% RH).

A typical 150mm thick slab will, therefore, take at least 200 days (almost seven months) to dry to the level required for certain floorcoverings. There may be more than one layer of screed in the floor construction and this needs to be included in the estimation.

In less favourable conditions, the drying time may be considerably longer and surface finishes such as power-floating can also extend drying times. It’s essential that moisture checks are carried out before floor laying proceeds.

Anhydrite screeds have similar drying times and always require abrading to remove surface laitance (a chemical contamination of the surface which always forms).

If not abraded within seven days, this laitance can slow down drying times and can also prevent adequate bonding between the screed and any surface treatment.



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DEALING WITH HIGH MOISTURE LEVELS IN SUBFLOORS

Surface DPMs and moisture suppressants are available to control moisture being released from a subfloor.

Surface DPMs are polymer-based systems which restrict or form a barrier to the passage of moisture. Providing these are laid at the correct thickness and without pinholes, these will allow moisture sensitive floorings and adhesives to be laid on floors that would otherwise be unsuitable.

Moisture suppressants are designed to suppress residual construction moisture only and are not to be used as the only DPM in a floor's construction, or where the membrane is subjected to hydrostatic pressure.

When specifying surface DPMs:

- The products should be selected and specified together with any other compounds that are needed (such as smoothing underlayments) to ensure compatibility.
- Any limitations detailed on the manufacturer's literature should be taken into consideration.
- The product will only be effective if the surface is properly prepared and the product is correctly applied in accordance with the product manufacturer's instructions.

If the flooring installation or any other works involves drilling or nailing into a subfloor, check that this will not compromise any existing or new DPM or other moisture protection barriers. For example, the effectiveness of an asphalt subfloor can be compromised by the use of screws or nails, allowing moisture to penetrate and cause issues.

SUBFLOOR CONDITION

Most manufacturers will specify how flat the subfloor should be for their product. *BS 8204-1:2003 Screeds, bases and in situ floorings* defines a flat



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(SR1) subfloor as having no deviation greater than 3mm underneath a 2m straight edge, but some products can tolerate greater unevenness and others require a higher standard.

SUBFLOOR SMOOTHING UNDERLAYMENTS

Floors that do not meet the manufacturer's specification can be improved by the use of smoothing underlayments. These are compounds which are applied in liquid form. When

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set and dry they provide a dense, smooth base suitable for flooring. They are usually suitable for laying to a depth of about 5mm and so they will not correct significant undulations in the floor, they will tend to produce a smooth surface layer which follows the original contours of the subfloor beneath. Most smoothing compound manufacturers offer products suitable for thicker applications to correct very uneven subfloors and will provide further information.

The purpose of a smoothing underlayment is to:

- Repair surface damage to an otherwise suitable subfloor.
- Provide a smooth surface to subfloors which have an open texture or other slight surface irregularity.
- Prepare old bases to receive new floorings.

Smoothing underlayments will not level an uneven floor and they will not provide moisture protection.

When laying a smoothing underlayment follow the manufacturer's instructions with regard to:

- The condition of the subfloor on which the underlayment is being applied, including any other products to be incorporated such as surface applied DPMs.
- The preparation of the subfloor surface including any requirement to prime the surface prior to applying the compound.
- The correct ratio of compound to liquid. Excessive liquid may allow the compound to flow more freely but will adversely affect the overall performance of the product.
- The ability of the underlayment to smooth out any trowel marks. Some underlayments produce a very hard surface and stoning down by hand may be very difficult once full hardness has been reached.

WATER MIX SMOOTHING COMPOUNDS

These mixes provide good hardness and resistance to indentation. They are usually able to take foot traffic within a few hours but the

drying time will depend on the thickness of the layer, temperature and ventilation, and the absorbency of the base. It is usually possible to lay flooring about 24 hours after laying the compound.

Over non-absorbent bases a primer will be required. They are not usually suitable for use over old adhesive residues.

LATEX MIX SMOOTHING COMPOUNDS

These mixes have good general performance over a wide range of subfloors, including old adhesive residues. They have good hardness and resilience for domestic use but where heavy floor loading is likely more suitable compounds should be used.

They are usually able to take foot traffic within a few hours and floorcoverings within about 24 hours depending on drying conditions. They are not always self-smoothing and a good standard of trowelling is necessary. Stoning with a carborundum stone is likely to be needed.

ACRYLIC SMOOTHING COMPOUNDS

These mixes incorporate an acrylic resin to improve the bond strength and hardness of the compound. They are suitable for use where heavy floor loading is likely. They are not always self-smoothing and may be difficult to stone due to their hardness, so special care needs to be taken when applying them. A second trowelling with water as soon as walk-on hardness is achieved can be beneficial, this is usually within about two hours.

PLYWOOD AND HARDBOARD

Annex A of *BS 8203:2017* specifies the qualities of plywood suitable for use under flooring. Floorlayers should always use boards which meet these specifications.

Flooring grade plywood of the appropriate thickness (5.5mm minimum) should be fixed over the subfloor using screws or annular (ring shank) nails fixed at 100mm centres around the perimeter of each board and at 150mm centres across the entire board.



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ABOVE: Plywood fixed as per recommended guidelines



ABOVE: Ring shank nails securing 4.8mm hardboard type HB.H oil-tempered

If thicker sheets of ply are required for the installation, these can be built up from layers of flooring grade ply. Marine or exterior grade plywoods have oils and resins incorporated in their construction and these can inhibit bonding between floorcoverings, smoothing compounds and adhesives.

They may also have low quality core veneers, hidden gaps and other imperfections which may affect the finished flooring, and therefore they should not be used.

Flooring grade hardboard is also available to meet the requirements of *BS 8203:2017*. These

are pre-conditioned (oil tempered) to offer excellent moisture resistance. Laying methods are the same as for flooring grade plywood.

SOUNDNESS

A good bonding of adhesives, primers and smoothing underlayments is only possible if the surface of the subfloor is sound. Any contaminated or unstable areas will provide a weak area or may prevent any bond forming at all.

Concrete and anhydrite screeds should have all surface laitance and any coatings which may have been used to protect the floor or alter the drying characteristics removed.

Floors with special finishes, such as power floated concrete, should be correctly prepared to ensure good adhesion to any adhesives, primers or other coatings.

Old subfloors can often be contaminated, worn or degraded. They can present a greater risk than newer substrates.

Particle board floors do not provide a good surface for the adhesion of flooring. These should be overlaid with a suitable thickness of flooring grade plywood using screws or annular (ring shank) nails fixed at 100mm centres around the perimeter of each board, and at 150mm centres across the entire board.



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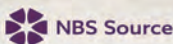
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UNDERFLOOR HEATING (UFH)

UFH is becoming the preferred method of heating in new homes, extensions and refurbishments due to its efficiency and its ability to work with heat exchangers that run at lower temperatures than boilers.

There are two main types of UFH:

1. Hydronic

Continuous water pipes installed into a grid system or directly into a screed. Warm water is circulated through the pipes from a boiler and the floor temperature is controlled by a sensor in connected to a thermostat. The movement of the water helps to create an even heat and avoids hot spots.

2. Electric

Flexible electric elements are fitted in the form of cables or mats. These elements may be covered by screed or heat dispersion panels but some systems are fitted directly to the subfloor surface. Some electrical systems are sold for DIY installation.

Heated screeds are usually installed as floating screeds and installed at an appropriate thickness on a slip membrane over thermal insulation. Although most types of screed may be used with UFH, screeds expand and contract with temperature changes and this can cause problems.

Curling, stress cracking and shrinkage can be exacerbated in a heated screed and any smoothing compounds used must be suitable. Most surface applied DPMs are unsuitable for use over UFH.

Things to consider when UFH is present:

- Is the UFH system suitable for the type of flooring? (Check the heating manufacturer's instructions).
- Are the flooring and installation products suitable for use over this type of UFH? (Check the flooring and product manufacturer's instructions).

- Is the surface onto which the floorcovering will be applied suitable for the floorcovering and method of installation?
- Does the UFH system include a floor sensor so that the subfloor/flooring surface temperature can be accurately controlled?
- Are the combined tog (insulation) values of the flooring, underlay and any other products laid over the UFH within the limits set by the UFH manufacturer?

FLOOR TEMPERATURE

High and/or prolonged surface temperatures will adversely affect flooring products and so the manufacturer's guidelines for all subfloor preparation products, adhesives and flooring must be followed and the information should be passed on to the end user.

Proposed changes in building regulations and developments in UFH systems, mean that this subject is being reviewed and it is likely that new guidelines will be developed and published during the life of this edition of the *NICF Guide to Domestic Flooring*.

COMMISSIONING

UFH must be commissioned slowly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. When this has been completed, it should be turned off before flooring products are installed.

The manufacturers of the flooring products will specify the time period for this and also the time that should be left after installation before the underfloor heating can be recommissioned and the rate at which the temperature can be increased until full operating temperature is reached.

The end-user should be advised that the heating should also be started at a low temperature and increased slowly when the heating is re-used after any period of non-use, for example, when the heating is being turned back on after the summer when there has been a long period of non-use.

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UNDERSTANDING MOISTURE MEASUREMENT TECHNOLOGY

1. RF detectors

- Indicative test only
- Provides quick assessment of the relative moisture condition from the surface to a nominal depth
- You obtain an understanding of whether the subfloor is “Dry” or “At Risk” or “Wet”
- Doesn't provide actual % readings

3. Pin meters

- Provide quick and precise moisture measurement at specific points
- Surface measurements or sub-surface measurements
- Provides actual % moisture content value in wood and wood moisture equivalent (WME) value in other materials

2. Impedance meters

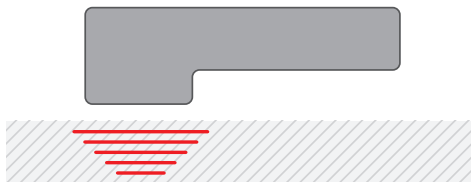
- Indicative test only
- Provides quick assessment of the relative moisture condition from the surface to a nominal depth
- Provides indication of actual moisture content % value in concrete and floor screeds

4. Hygrometers

- The definitive method for assessing the moisture condition of subfloor
- Measures RH of an air pocket in equilibrium within the floor
- Recognised in British Standards

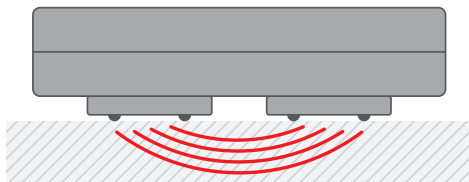
1. Subsurface detection using radio frequency (RF)

Reads up to a nominal depth of +/- 20mm (from the surface) dependent upon material.



2. Subsurface detection using electrical impedance

Reads up to a nominal depth of +/- 25mm (from the surface) dependent upon material.



Gives indicative tests ONLY. Will not read at depths greater than indicated above. Dry readings do NOT guarantee a substrate is dry throughout.

Both systems will give false readings if positioned over metal objects or pipework (e.g., wet or dry UFH systems) fitted close to the surface within subfloors.

Equally, both systems will NOT give false readings if positioned over metal objects or pipework which are correctly fitted below 30mm from surface.

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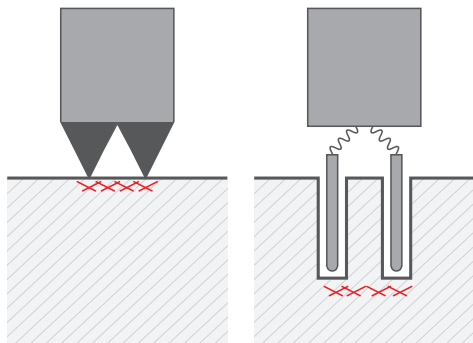
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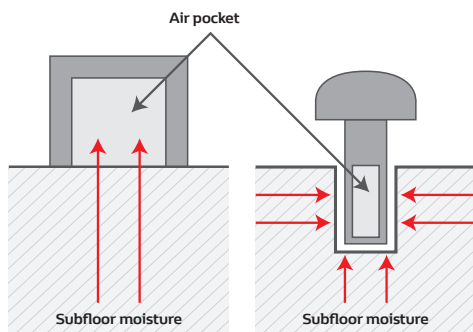
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3. Pin meters



4. Hygrometers (recognised in BS)



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Equilibrium RH measurement

Sub-surface equivalent

Uses electrical impedance

Uses electrical impedance

Records RH

Follows same principle as the Box hygrometer

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Can obtain measurement to specified depth

Measures moisture content of trapped air pocket thus reflecting moisture content of the slab

Done by drilling a hole in subfloor and inserting a capped sleeve to chosen depth

Can give false readings, e.g., if conductivity of moisture is effected by salt

Also subject to false readings if additional factors effect conductivity

Can be difficult to ensure boxes are not disturbed on site

Readings do not directly correlate to surface hygrometer method

INTERPRETING READINGS

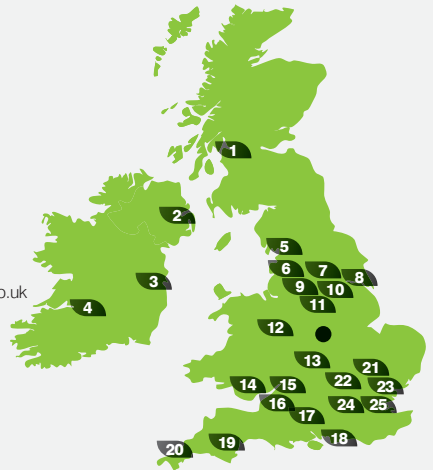
Instrument type	Reading	Probable interpretation	Advisory comments / remarks
RF Detector and Impedance Meter (indicative tests only) Search Mode ± between 20-25mm from surface	Low	Dry	Must be confident that higher levels of moisture are not contained deeper in slab or measuring air pocket: Consider using hygrometer or sleeve test
	High	Wet	Conductive material or not: Must use hygrometer or sleeve for accurate measurement
Pin Meter (Measure Mode)	Low	Dry	Floor dry (at surface and between the pins)
	High	Wet	Conductive material? Must use hygrometer or sleeve if subfloor is <u>new</u> and measurement taken early in day, test in "RF" Search Mode to rule out condensation.
Hygrometer or Sleeve Test (in accordance with BS)	<75% RH	Dry	Floor is DRY
	>75% RH	Wet	Floor is WET

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GENERAL

Resilient flooring is defined as “material able to recover after compression”. The term covers a wide variety of materials including linoleum, vinyl, rubber and cork. These types of products may be supplied in sheet or tile form. Resilient floorings usually also have a moisture resistant surface. Despite the definition, all resilient floors should be protected from indentations from heavy or point loads.

The installation of resilient flooring is covered by *BS 8203:2017 Installation of resilient floor-coverings – Code of practice.*

The general procedures for installing different types of resilient flooring are the same – the key differences being between sheet and tile installation – so these are dealt with separately in subsequent sections.

TYPES OF RESILIENT FLOORING

VINYLISED THERMOPLASTIC TILES

With low cost and high overall performance, these tiles incorporate vinyl resins, giving a degree of flexibility and added resistance to wear. Resistance to grease and oil is limited, and they should not be used where excessive contamination of this type might be a factor. They are mainly used in local authority locations and private housing.

SEMI-FLEXIBLE PVC TILES

These tiles are manufactured using plasticised PVC (polyvinyl chloride), mineral fillers, stabilisers and pigments. They provide excellent overall performance and have good resistance to most common chemicals (bleaches, dilute acids, grease and oil, etc.).

Embossed tiles, however, should not be used where contamination from these substances is likely to occur, as the embossing can trap soiling.

The excellent overall performance of this type of product has established it as probably the most versatile of floorings in its ability to function extremely well in most types of situations and in critical conditions.

Some manufacturers produce ranges which can be loose laid, including those which have interlocking edge profiles to hold the tiles together and enable them to be laid as a floating floor.

UNBACKED FLEXIBLE PVC

Flexible PVC products are available in roll (sheet) form, or as tiles. These floorings are quiet in use, have good resilience and ability to stand up well to heavy point loading, with

excellent recovery from indentation. They have good resistance to dilute acids, alkalis and most common chemicals. Resistance to wear is high and the closed impervious surface makes maintenance easy.

BACKED FLEXIBLE PVC

This flooring is made from a layer of flexible PVC on a backing of needled jute or inorganic fibre felt. It can also be backed with high-density PVC foam.

These variants provide a dense, hard wearing surface finish, with excellent chemical resistance, a soft feel underfoot, and a good level of insulation from impact transmitted sound.

They are particularly suitable for use in locations such as blocks of flats with suspended concrete floors where sound insulation is required.

CUSHIONED VINYL FLOORING

Cushioned vinyl for domestic use is produced using PVC incorporating a glass fibre interlayer for stability. The surface is printed and then a transparent wear layer is applied. The sheet is then backed with a foamed PVC to give the flooring softness underfoot.

Some cushioned vinyls are embossed or debossed (using chemical inhibitors in the printing process), to give them texture, creating features such as wood grain or grout lines to enhance the pattern.

Additives such as anti-slip granules can be incorporated into the surface. Domestic cushioned vinyl offers resilience and ease of maintenance, but it can be more prone to indentations and damage.



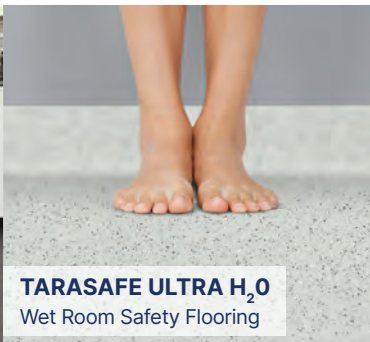
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CORK TILES

These are manufactured from granulated cork which is compressed and baked, causing the natural resins and added binders to flow and form a firmly bonded homogeneous block from which tiles of varying size and thickness are cut.

The standard size is 300mm square but other sizes may be available. Thickness varies from 3-8mm, although 4.8mm and 6.4mm are most generally used.

Cork tiles have a warm and attractive natural finish when appropriately maintained. They can be supplied pre-finished with wax, urethane, polymer or bonded vinyl coatings.

They are hard-wearing, quiet underfoot and resistant to damage from dilute acids and most common chemicals.

LINOLEUM

Linoleum is made from natural vegetable fibres mixed with oils, natural resins, wood flour and chalk hot-rolled on to jute backing. It is produced in both sheet and tile format.

Sheet product can be cut into tiles, but these tiles will not be as dimensionally stable and must be installed within a certain time frame. The manufacturer will also specify the adhesive which must be used.

Linoleum is durable, hygienic, and low maintenance. It offers some slip resistance and has very good anti-static properties, so it is often specified in areas where sensitive electronic equipment is stored.

Installation of this product is much the same as in the next section for installing resilient flooring, however it should be noted that when applying adhesive, it is recommended that the flooring is folded back along its length rather than its width to avoid problems with contraction as the product and adhesive dries.

Most manufacturers recommend that linoleum should be bonded to the floor with adhesive to produce a tight seam. If welding is preferred, linoleum welding rod is available. ■

FITA (Flooring Industry Training Association) runs regular short courses in Resilient Installation for Domestic Installers at their training centres at Loughborough and Kirkcaldy. **Visit www.fita.co.uk**

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UNDERLAY SYSTEMS

PVC and some other resilient flooring types use plasticisers to improve the flexibility and resilience of the flooring and without these compounds, the flooring would be brittle and liable to cracking.

Plasticisers can inter-react when two plasticised products are placed together, causing problems such as discolouration, cracking and brittleness, and softening (emulsifying) of adhesives. This process is known as Plasticiser Migration because the plasticisers physically move from one of the products to the other.

It is important to remove old floorcoverings or to use a barrier layer of a suitable smoothing compound when laying resilient floorcoverings, and to use the correct adhesives specified by the manufacturer to avoid plasticiser migration from happening.

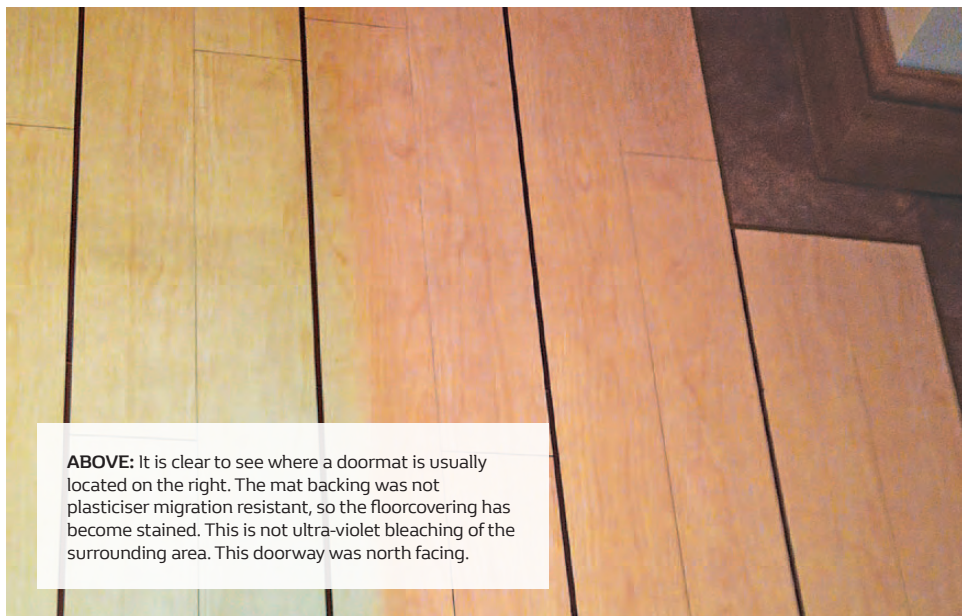
It is also important to advise the end user not to use rubber-backed or plasticised door mats. Resilient flooring should not be laid directly onto asphalt or bituminous subfloors.

Tapes and spray adhesives must be checked before use to ensure they are suitable for use with vinyl.

Tapes and sprays for carpets will emulsify if used under vinyl and may cause discolouration.

Duct/gaffer tape is usually not suitable for vinyl floorcoverings, so flooring installers should be careful about using these tapes on off-cuts or rolls in storage.

Some felt-backed vinyl products can be laid over existing floorcoverings. Be sure to check with the manufacturer of the product. ■



ABOVE: It is clear to see where a doormat is usually located on the right. The mat backing was not plasticiser migration resistant, so the floorcovering has become stained. This is not ultra-violet bleaching of the surrounding area. This doorway was north facing.



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ABOVE: Pressure sensitive adhesives such as UZIN KE 2000 S are ideal for installing vinyl floorcoverings as they can be left to partially dry before the vinyl is installed and allow for natural movement of the vinyl. Visit www.uzin.co.uk

The installation of resilient flooring is covered by BS 8203:2017 Installation of resilient floorcoverings – Code of practice and installers should familiarise themselves with the requirements of this standard, and with the specific installation instructions for the product they are fitting (which may be different to the Standard), and where this is the case, the instructions overrule the Standard.

As the flooring will conform to any imperfections in the subfloor, good subfloor preparation is vital. Resilient flooring also inhibits the passage of moisture, so moisture readings are vital before selecting the appropriate products and processes to achieve a satisfactory installation.

In a domestic environment, it is the flooring installer's responsibility to carry out these moisture checks. The homeowner is unlikely to understand the need for this or have the equipment or expertise to do it.

SITE CONDITIONS

The property should be consistently at normal temperature and humidity levels, ideally between 18-27°C and with a floor temperature of no less than 10°C. The moisture content of the subfloor must be $\leq 75\%$ RH (if the flooring instructions state a different RH, or use different units for the measurement such as %MC or %CM this must be complied with).

If the subfloor has a higher moisture content, then the manufacturer's recommendations for dealing with this should be followed. Atmospheric moisture content during installation should be kept between 35-55% RH. Any stated setting, drying or curing times, assume optimum conditions. Where UFH is present in the subfloor, **refer to Section Four for further details.**

The subfloor should be sound, smooth, level, dry, and free from contamination. The subfloor should be tested for compliance by the flooring installer and the installation should only proceed if these requirements are met or will be corrected as part of the installation process. **Refer to Section Four for further details.**

BS 8203:2017 states: Those responsible for the design and construction of the subfloor should ensure that it meets the requirements for hardness, strength, soundness, levels and surface regularities, dryness and other design parameters before floorcovering installation is commenced.

This does not absolve the flooring installer from a responsibility to check that the subfloor conforms to the requirements of the flooring, especially where domestic work is being undertaken in a mature property where no recent building work has been taking place.

If the subfloor requires remedial work beyond the floorlayer's abilities, the customer should be advised to engage appropriately competent contractors to carry out the work before the flooring is installed.

ACCLIMATISATION

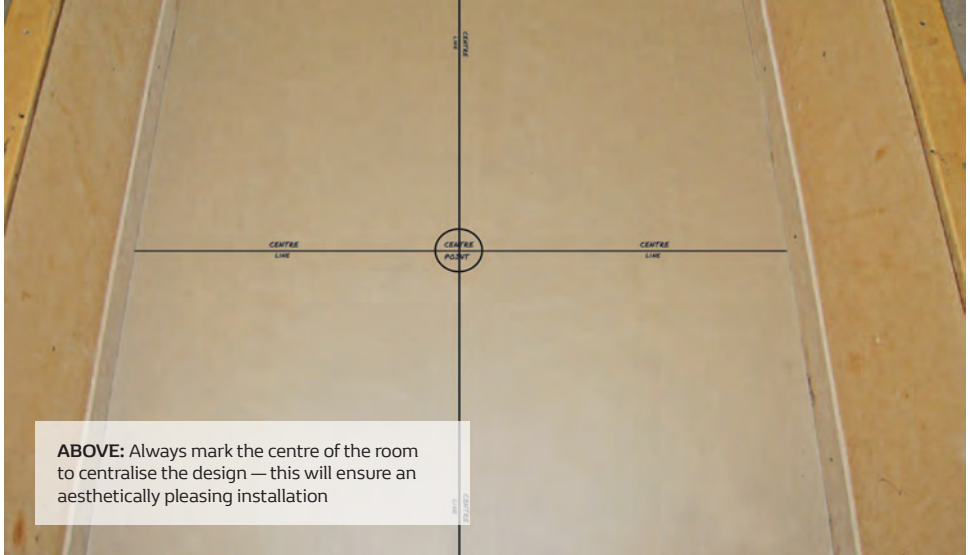
All floorcoverings must be acclimatised in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions prior to installation. Materials should be stored in the area where the flooring is to be laid with the site consistently at normal operating temperature and humidity levels.

If the site conditions are not operational or are not at the recommended temperatures and humidity levels, then once the flooring is installed it will expand or contract, and this may cause the flooring to fail.

MARKING OUT

Resilient flooring products are usually available in rolls or cut lengths. Common roll widths are 2/3/4/5m, but these widths have a tolerance of $\pm 1.25\%$. This can mean a difference of up to 62.5mm on a 5m width and should be taken into account when measuring and planning.

1. When laying out the flooring, make sure that if the product has a pattern, and that this is centralised, creating equal cuts on each side, and aligned to the main wall or feature, or to the walkway.
2. When tile effect patterns are used, both length and width should be centralised. If joins are necessary, position them away from traffic areas. In all cases, consultation with the customer will prevent disappointment and avoid complaints.
3. Find the centre of the end walls by measuring the width and dividing this by two. Do this at both ends and mark by placing masking tape on the skirting board and marking this with a pencil.
4. If a tile effect is being installed, a third mark is needed to find the centre of the length. Again, measure the length and divide by two, marking this measurement as before.
5. Once these measurements are done, be sure to double-check.
6. Find the centre points at each end of the vinyl and, making sure there is still excess waste, mark on the reverse side.
7. For tile effect patterns, mark the centre points of the sides as well. Join the marks on the reverse of the vinyl. Apply this to both ends and mark four points for tile effect.
8. Once these marks are done, join them up using a straight edge, creating a cross



ABOVE: Always mark the centre of the room to centralise the design — this will ensure an aesthetically pleasing installation



ABOVE: Mark the centre of the pattern on the reverse in pencil

RIGHT: The lines on your vinyl should line up with the ones on the floor and skirting



on the reverse of the vinyl. Use a pencil to carry out this task as pen may bleed through to the surface.

- Place the flooring in the area of installation and line up the ends with the marks on the skirting boards. Double check the pattern and make sure all sides are equal.

INSTALLING

Some sheet products can be loose laid up to a certain size, without the use of adhesives or tape to hold them in place. Check the manufacturer's instructions as to whether or not this can be done and for any limitations.

The flooring can simply be trimmed to shape around the perimeter and at any obstacles using an appropriate cutter or trimming tool.

- Some resilient sheet products, such as cushion vinyl, up to a certain size can be perimeter fixed using a plasticiser migration resistant tape (PMR or anti-plas) placed on two adjacent sides of the area in an "L" shape. PMR spray adhesive may be used as an alternative to tape. Manufacturers will recommend their own maximum size to be fitted in this way.
- Above this limit, the flooring should be fully adhered. Small areas of flooring may be perimeter fixed all round, but lengths/widths above 1m may bubble when they expand if they are fixed all round.
- When placing the tape, the floor must be sound, smooth and dry. It is good practice to prime the surface with an appropriate primer before placing the tape to ensure a good bond.



ABOVE: Once the vinyl is in position, cut the corners out and peel off the top surface from the PMR tape

BELOW: The vinyl can be pressed onto the tape, taking care not to distort it. Once this is done to all sides the vinyl is ready to be trimmed in.



ABOVE: Remove waste, cut corners out and make relief cuts around architrave to de-stress the vinyl

BELOW: If you are right-handed, keep your left shoulder against the wall and cut in, working in an anti-clockwise direction



4. Place the tape be no more than 2mm away from any fixed object to create a watertight seal. The use of carpet tape or carpet adhesive spray with a vinyl floorcovering will cause plasticiser migration (emulsifying of the adhesive and/or discolouration of the flooring) and should be avoided.
5. When fully adhering vinyl flooring, it is vital the correct adhesive is used, along with the recommended notched trowel. The adhesive will be free from ingredients which could potentially cause plasticiser migration, and the trowel will apply the exact amount of adhesive necessary to create a secure bond.
6. Specialist adhesives are available to cope with demanding environments, for example, where high temperatures may be encountered in conservatories or in front of patio doors.
7. When applying adhesives, be sure to always work in manageable sections. This will allow the flooring to achieve the optimum adhesive transfer before the adhesive has skinned over.
8. The flooring must then be rolled with the appropriate weight floor roller recommended by the flooring manufacturer. If the flooring is placed into the adhesive too late, the adhesive will not hold well and the flooring may fail.
9. Some adhesives can be applied by roller to create a flatter film surface. Where recommended, the roller should be pre-wetted and care should be taken to ensure the



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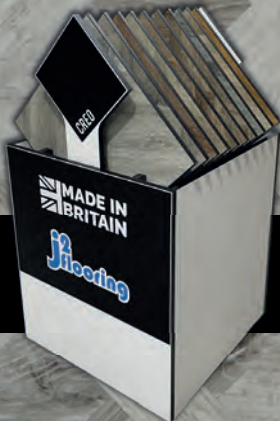


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ABOVE: Care should be taken to keep the groove straight and not to groove too deep



ABOVE: Trim the weld with so that the weld cools more quickly

adhesive film is of the correct thickness and not rolled/spread too thinly.

10. If the flooring is to be fully adhered, roughly cut the flooring to shape allowing approximately 25-50mm waste.
11. Pull the flooring back about halfway, taking care not to crease it. Whether it is pulled back in length or width, will depend on the shape of the area (for linoleum it should be pulled back along the length and not the width to avoid shrinkage problems).
12. Use a recommended adhesive and apply this to a manageable area, place the flooring into the adhesive within the recommended open time and continue this procedure until the whole of one side is bonded, then roll back the other half and repeat the process.
13. Once complete, roll the entire area with the appropriate weight of roller in two directions, along both the width and length.

TRIMMING

Trimming is done once the flooring is fixed in place so it does not move during the trimming process. It can be done by hand using a knife (straight, hook and concave blades are available) or with a purpose-made trimming tool.

Take care to avoid damage to skirting boards and other obstacles and to keep the cut edge smooth. Removing excess waste material before doing final cutting-in can make trimming easier.

Sealants are sometimes applied to the perimeter of the vinyl once the trimming is complete. However, this is not necessary if the

placement of the tape or the adhesive has been carried out correctly, and the flooring has not been trimmed short.

JOINS

Where possible, joins should be welded. If it is done correctly, then it will fuse the two sections together and result in a seam that is strong, does not gap and has nowhere for any dirt to build up in the seam.

There are various techniques for cutting joins. Concave blades are ideal as the cutting edge is near vertical when double-cutting, thus ensuring the cut is exactly the same on both pieces.

If the product being seamed has no pattern, then the best way to disguise the appearance is to perform a serpentine or wave cut. If the product is patterned, make sure the pattern lines up. Following either the grout line or between the planks helps disguise the join.

Always try and do the seams first; if a mistake occurs then there is still sufficient waste. The seam must be fixed to the subfloor to counteract movement, whether this is with PMR tape or adhesive.

Cushioned and other sheet vinyl flooring can be cold-welded using a chemical welding compound. A special masking tape is applied over the join and then cut through along the join with a knife. The compound is applied to the join, usually with an applicator attached to the tube, and left to begin to set. Once the excess welding compound has become rubbery the tape can be peeled away with the excess compound.



ABOVE: Apply the weld with a welding gun set at the correct temperature



ABOVE: Mozart trimming knives makes trimming the weld easier and the changeable blade means no sharpening

Other resilient floors may be joined using a hot-weld. The flooring material will have a corresponding weld rod which is fused into a groove cut along the joint line. The correct depth for a groove is two-thirds the thickness of the material.

A good rule of thumb is to groove the material until the backing is just about visible. This will ensure the correct depth, which allows the flooring to be welded at three points of contact. The use of a P-type hand-groover or a mechanical grooving machine are the best ways to achieve this result.

1. The weld should be tested on a scrap piece of flooring attached to a piece of ply and grooved to ascertain the correct temperature and speed. If the temperature is too low or the speed is too quick, the weld rod will not take and will pull out. If the temperature is too high or the speed too slow, the gun will burn the surface of the floorcovering.
2. Once the correct temperature has been found along with the correct speed, cut a piece of weld rod long enough to work with comfortably, taking into account the weld will need to be short of the opposite end, as the gun will reach the wall before the weld is finished.
3. Once the floor is welded to a certain point, the weld will need to be finished off in the opposite direction. Warm the start of the weld with the gun and then pass the rod through the nozzle, making sure sufficient heat is applied to the very end.
4. Place the weld rod into the groove and, keeping the base of the nozzle parallel with

the floor, continue along the groove. Pay close attention to the crotch where the rod meets the surface of the flooring. A slight bleed should be visible. If not, slow down until it is. When the weld is at a point to turn around, trim off the excess and trim flush about 20mm.

5. Produce a small groove in the weld, so the next weld from the opposite direction can fuse into it, and weld the rest of the groove in the opposite direction.
6. Using a spatula knife and skate or alternatively a weld-trimming knife, trim off the excess weld rod slightly proud of the flooring surface.
7. This will allow the weld to cool more quickly, and after about 20 minutes it can be trimmed flush.
8. Hold the trimming blade at an angle where it will pass over the surface of the flooring without causing damage, but will trim the weld rod flush. ■



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LVT installation is covered by *BS 8203:2017 Installation of resilient floorcoverings – Code of practice* and installers should familiarise themselves with the requirements of this standard. They should also make themselves familiar with the specific installation instructions for the product they are fitting which may be different to the Standard and, where this is the case, the manufacturer's instructions overrule the Standard.

As the flooring will conform to any imperfections in the subfloor, good subfloor preparation is vital. Resilient flooring also inhibits the passage of moisture, so moisture readings are vital before selecting the appropriate products and processes to achieve a satisfactory installation.

In a domestic environment, it is the flooring installer's responsibility to carry out these moisture checks. The homeowner is unlikely to understand the need for this or have the equipment or expertise to do it.

SITE CONDITIONS

The property should be consistently at normal temperature and humidity levels, ideally between 18-27°C and with a floor temperature of no less than 10°C. The moisture content of the subfloor must be $\leq 75\%$ RH (if the flooring instructions state a different RH, or use different units for the measurement such as %MC or %CM this must be complied with).

If the subfloor has a higher moisture content, then the manufacturer's recommendations for dealing with this should be followed. Atmospheric moisture content during installation should be kept between 35-55% RH. Any stated setting, drying or curing times assume optimum conditions.

Where UFH is present in the subfloor, refer to Section Four for further details.

The subfloor should be sound, smooth, level, dry, and free from contamination. The subfloor should be tested for compliance by the flooring installer and the installation should only proceed if these requirements are met, or will be corrected as part of the installation process. **Refer to Section Four for further details.**

BS 8203:2017 states: Those responsible for the design and construction of the subfloor should ensure that it meets the requirements for hardness, strength, soundness, levels and surface regularities, dryness and other design parameters before floorcovering installation is commenced.

This does not absolve the flooring installer from a responsibility to check that the subfloor conforms to the requirements of the flooring, especially where domestic work is being undertaken in a mature property when no recent building work has been taking place.

If the subfloor requires work beyond the floor-layer's abilities the customer should be advised to engage appropriately competent contractors to carry out the work before the flooring is installed.

ACCLIMATISATION

All floorcoverings must be acclimatised in accordance with manufacturer's instructions prior to installation. Materials should be stored in the area where the flooring is to be laid with the site consistently at normal ► (CONT. ON P. 84)



ABOVE: Polyflor's newly refreshed Camaro Collection

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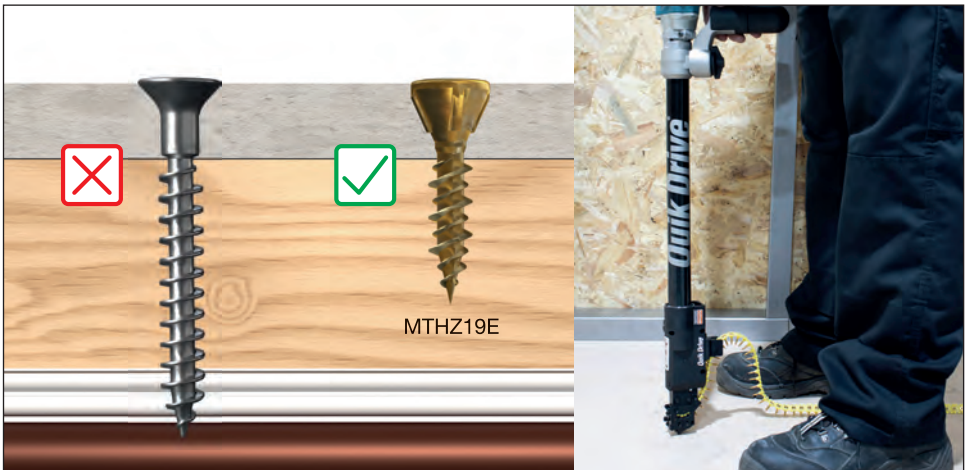


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operating temperature and humidity levels. If the site conditions are not operational or not at the recommended temperatures and humidity levels, once the flooring is installed it will expand or contract and this may cause the flooring to fail.

BEFORE COMMENCING INSTALLATION

Before starting, check with the customer/end user that the flooring is the correct product/colour and that the layout, including the position of any borders and motifs and the overall look of the finished floor meets the customer's expectations. The customer should be consulted during the marking out and, whenever an agreement is made, it is always best to note this and obtain a signature confirming the agreement.

Check there are enough materials to complete the job, including borders, feature strips, etc.

ADHESIVES

There are five main types of adhesive for use with resilient floor tiles:

1. Universal adhesive

A water-based adhesive with high grab strength to be used in areas not subjected to high temperature or excessive moisture, ideally suited to straight lay applications. Care must be taken not to allow too much open time as this will reduce the effectiveness of the adhesive.

2. High temperature (HT) adhesive

For use in areas that are subject to excessive heat (e.g., conservatories) areas subject to direct sunlight and over UFH (underfloor heating), etc.

Once the tiles have been placed, the floor must be rolled with the recommended weight floor roller.

The flooring must not be subjected to excessive heat until the adhesive has cured, generally a minimum of 48 hours (always consult data sheet or manufacturer).

3. Pressure sensitive adhesive

This is a dry-set system meaning the excess moisture in the adhesive must disperse before installation can begin. Once applied and allowed to dry the adhesive will appear clear. It has a long open time and very high grab making it ideal for more complex work such as for borders and inserts. This type of adhesive is not suitable for areas subject to high temperatures or excessive moisture.

4. Hybrid adhesive

This is a versatile adhesive that can be used as a wet-set adhesive if the tiles are laid after a specified open time, but which will also act as a pressure-sensitive adhesive, if the tiles are laid after a longer time. The manufacturer's product instructions will specify the possible options and how the adhesive should be used.

5. Two-part (epoxy) adhesive

Used for areas subjected to high levels of moisture such as bathrooms and wet rooms. This adhesive consists of two parts (A and B) and must be mixed to the manufacturer's instructions. It has a very short open time and, once mixed, must be used quickly. If the mixed adhesive is left in the container it will generate heat and cure.

Always dry-fit the area first, then remove tiles, apply adhesive, and then place tiles back.

Always work towards the doorway, as any surface pressure applied to the tile before the adhesive has cured, will cause the adhesive to squeeze through the edges of the tile. It is recommended not to use a pressure roller in this case.

Two-part adhesives are classed as a hazardous material and must be disposed of in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and local waste control guidelines

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ABOVE: Straight lay from centre line resulting in ideal size cuts at sides

laid without adhesive as a floating floor, with or without a suitable underlay. Installation requirements vary and the product installation instructions should be followed in every case. Acclimatisation is especially important for these products.

LOOSE LAY LVT SYSTEMS

Loose lay LVT tiles are available. These have square edges and are designed to be laid directly onto the subfloor without the need for adhesive. Installation requirements vary and the product installation instructions should be followed in every case. Acclimatisation is especially important for these products.

MARKING OUT

Before beginning any marking out, check the proposed layout and alignment of the flooring with the end customer.

There are many different possible patterns for vinyl tiles but all marking out begins from centre lines. These are the datum lines which should always be the point of reference throughout the installation.

When dealing with an irregular shaped room, e.g., an L-shaped kitchen or hallway, consult

the client/end user and agree which is the main focal point area. This will be the area used to align the tiles.

As no area is truly square, there are some measurements which must be taken.

1. First, check the width of the area at each end followed by the length of the area on each side.
2. Then measure the diagonals from corner to corner. This will indicate how square the area is, and will allow you to inform the client if, and where, the flooring will run out.
3. Measure the width at one end and halve this measurement to find the mid-point.
4. Do this again at the opposite end of the area, remembering to always double-check. Strike a line between the two mid-points to create a centre line.
5. Next, measure the length of this centre line and find the mid-point of this line, effectively this is the centre point of the room. From this point, a second line can be drawn at right angles using a laser line, measuring 3-4-5 triangles or using a square.
6. The lines must be at right angles to each other, so double-check before proceeding to lay out the proposed pattern guidelines.

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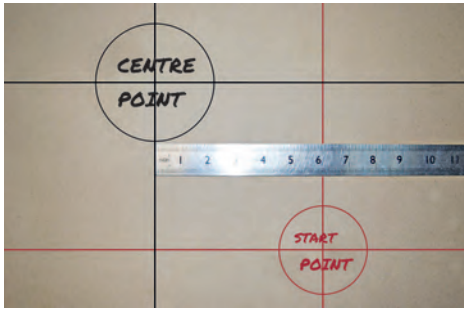


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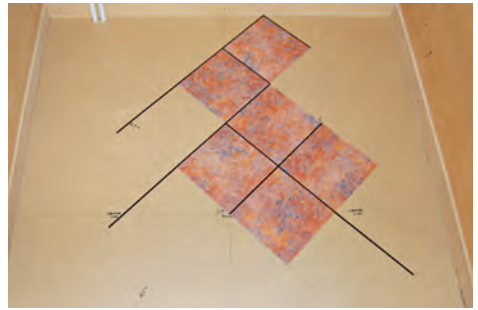
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ABOVE: If edge cuts were too small, move the line by half of the tile size to create a new start line.



ABOVE: Always dry-lay some tiles first and stand back to see if they look correct.

MARKING OUT STRAIGHT LAY

This works for both tiles and strip wood.

1. Place a tile at the centre point with the two edges along the centre lines, and tape in place with some double sided tape creating a fixed point to work off.
2. Dry-lay tiles along the centre lines towards the walls, taking into account any feature strips, to see the size of the edge tile.
3. If this edge tile is less than half a tile, adjust the centre tile so it overlaps the mid-point by half, in either length or width or both, depending on edge cuts and recheck.
4. Mark the alternative measurements on the subfloor. This is now the start line.

MARKING OUT 45°

1. Using either a laser line with a 45°, square tile or a trammel, mark out the 45° points and strike a line between them, creating a cross on the subfloor.
2. The line must pass through the centre point. Then position a tile along the 45° line and over the centre point.
3. If the markings are correct, then all four points will correspond with the centre lines and tape down.
4. Follow the straight-lay procedure to find out what edge cuts are and adjust accordingly.
5. Tiles on a 45° angle can also be adjusted by a quarter of a tile to adjust the edge cuts.

BORDERS

When a border is incorporated into the floor, the marking out procedure differs slightly. When tiles are being used, these will dictate where the border will be.

1. Lay the tiles out as before. The edge of the nearest full tile to the wall is where the border will be placed. Mark this and then carry out the same procedure around the perimeter of the area, always working off the centre lines.
2. Once these lines have been marked using an off cut of border, mark out the border working off the perimeter line created.
3. These lines are the gluing lines and are there for reference only.
4. When marking out the border, it may not run parallel to the walls. This should have been indicated at the measuring stage and agreed with the client.

MOTIFS

When marking out for a motif, it is almost entirely down to the client which way, and where they would like it placed. Generally, the motif is placed in the centre of the room, but can vary when it comes to irregular shaped areas.

Always consult the client at the marking-out stage as to where they would like it placed, e.g., if the client has chosen a compass design, do they want it pointing to true North or otherwise?



Image: Studio Designs Chicory Haze Herringbone CLH16



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HERRINGBONE

1. When marking out for a herringbone design, mark one 45° line and the perimeter border lines, if these are being incorporated.
2. Place a tile along the 45° line with one corner on the centre point.
3. Create a part of the herringbone design with the flooring and hold the pattern together with masking tape. Use this to check the alignment of the starting tile and then, by marking along the bottom edge and moving the pattern repeated to check the position of the outermost tiles against the wall or border.
4. Adjust the starting point if necessary.

INSTALLING THE TILES

Once the marking out process is complete and the client has agreed on positioning of borders, motifs, cuts etc., the installation can proceed.

1. Depending on the type of adhesive being used, first measure out an area along the start line which can be comfortably fitted within the specified open time of the adhesive, and mark this using low-tack masking tape. This will assist in keeping the area clean, and any excess adhesive will be removed when the masking tape is removed and disposed of.
2. Apply the adhesive following the manufacturer's instructions. Working from the centre line or the start line, once the adhesive has been applied, place the tiles into position one by one making sure you apply surface pressure to get a good bond.
3. Once a couple of rows have been installed along the start line, roll with the recommended weight floor roller and ideally leave for a minimum of 20-30 minutes to allow time for the adhesive to cure slightly and create a solid row to work off.
4. This row of tiles is the most important as it will dictate the positioning of all corresponding tiles placed so it is important to make sure this will not move during the rest of the installation process.

5. Once the starting row is secure, continue with the installation of the rest of the tiles up to the walls or border lines, making sure all cuts are neat and square. If installing up to a wall, the gap between the tile and the wall should be no greater than 0.5mm.
6. Cutting LVT can be done with a guillotine or with a concave blade, or straight blade in a utility knife. The tiles should not be heated up to assist cutting as they will shrink and the tile will be short of the wall.
7. When installing up to a fixed object/wall which is straight, position a tile over the existing tile nearest the object/wall, making sure that the outside edge is lined up with the tile underneath.
8. Next, position a tile up to the object/wall, overlapping the first tile, and then mark the first tile by scoring along the edge of the overlapping tile.
9. Cut the first tile along the scored line, and it will fit the gap between the existing tile and the object/wall.
10. When cutting up to border lines, use a guillotine or straight edge to ensure the cuts are exact and will fit neatly against border tiles without leaving any gaps or irregularities.
11. For awkward cuts around curves or architraves, it is advisable that a template be made first. Cut a piece of template paper the exact size of the tile and place into position, creasing it upwards at the point where the template meets the curved shape.
12. Score around the shape and then trim the template using a straight blade. Double check the cut template to make sure it is a snug fit.
13. Place the paper over the tile and trace around the paper using a pencil. If the pencil mark is hard to see, first place some masking tape where the lines will be. Once transferred, cut along the lines and place the tile into position.
14. If the tile design has a bevelled edge, this can be recreated by using a bevelling tool which creates an angle of 25°, or very



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carefully, using a trimming tool with a flat blade held at an angle. If the bevel is created using this method, care must be taken to only trim the wear layer.

15. When a motif is to be installed, it can either be glued into place first, or inserted at the end of the installation.
16. If the motif is to be installed first, mask around the motif so as not to get any excess adhesive on the subfloor. Apply the adhesive and place the motif into position and roll with either a hand roller or flooring roller.
17. Allow the adhesive to form a good hold and then install the field area. Whenever a tile overlaps the motif, using some under and over scribes, scribe the edge of the motif on to the tile and trim making sure a neat finish is obtained.
18. If the motif is to be installed at the end of the installation, mask up the inside edge of the motif to stop any excess adhesive setting in the motif area, making sure to remove this before placing the field tiles.
19. Once half the field tiles are installed, place the motif in position and score around the edge. Remove the motif and trim the tiles accordingly. This allows for correct placement once the remainder of the field is installed.
20. Place the motif back in position, score the remaining tiles and trim accordingly.
21. Finally, apply adhesive and place the motif in position, making sure of correct positioning and roll to ensure good overall adhesive transfer.

DRESSING

Once the installation has been completed, the floor may need to have a surface dressing applied (always consult the manufacturer). Dressing must be carried out no earlier than 48 hours after the flooring has been installed. Make sure that the materials being used are either supplied by the flooring manufacturer or recommended by them.

The purpose of a dressing is to provide an additional wear surface which can (and should) be renewed periodically to maintain the appearance of the flooring. However, the dressing usually has a different sheen to the original flooring and so may alter the appearance of the flooring.

1. Clean off any residual contamination from tiles, including any adhesive residues, pencil marks or surface dust and dirt by using the flooring maintenance cleaner.
2. Then wash the floor with clean cold water making sure all maintenance cleaner is removed.
3. Apply the surface dressing following the manufacturer's guidelines in one direction, i.e., across the width of the floor first.
4. Once this has completely dried (air movers or fans can aid the drying process), the second coat can be applied. This is done at 90° to the first coat, i.e., along the length.
5. The dressed flooring should not be subjected to foot traffic for 24 hours.
6. Finally, the client should be instructed in how to clean and care for the new flooring, and how frequently, or at what stage, the dressing should be reapplied. ■



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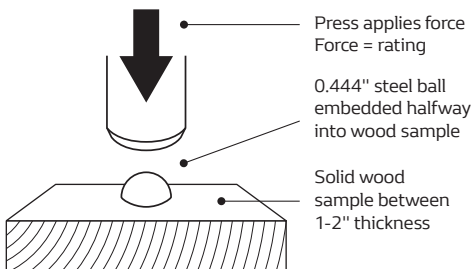
GENERAL

Flooring can be made from solid wood or engineered wood which usually comprises a surface veneer of a decorative hardwood with a manufactured board below of veneers, wood strips or fibreboard. Laminate flooring is not usually considered a wood flooring and is dealt with in **Section 10**.

Timber is classified as hardwoods or softwoods depending on the botanical nature of the tree: hardwoods come from deciduous, broad-leaved trees and softwoods from conifers. However, this botanical classification bears no relation to the hardness of the timber when used as flooring. Some hardwoods are very soft (balsa is hardwood) and some softwoods are very hard.

The actual hardness of a timber is measured using the Janka hardness test. This measures the resistance of the timber to indentation. It measures the force required to embed an 11.28 mm (0.444 in) steel ball into wood to half the ball's diameter.

Different species of wood have different degrees of hardness. When flooring is being specified for commercial use the hardness rating should be considered, but for normal domestic use this is not critical and the manufacturer will specify the suitability of the product and any limitations in



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the product information. There are also helpful tables in Appendix B of *BS 8201:2011 Code of practice for installation of flooring of wood and wood-based panels*.

The hardness of wood varies with the direction of the wood grain. Testing on the surface of a plank, perpendicular to the grain, is said to be of "side hardness". Testing the cut surface of a stump is called a test of "end hardness".



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Typical Hardness values of some of the more common timbers used in flooring are:

Bamboo	1800	Birch	1260
Maple	1450	Walnut	1010
Ash	1320	Teak	1000
Beech	1300	Cherry	950

The trunk of a tree contains heartwood and sapwood. The sapwood is the outer layers of the trunk closest to the bark. It is usually lighter in colour and density. The heartwood is the timber at the centre of the trunk.

Some flooring types include sapwood as well as heartwood, so there may be lighter streaks at the edges of some planks where the sapwood is present.

WOOD SPECIES

Some of the timbers typically used in flooring are listed here:

ALDER

A light reddish-brown coloured hardwood with an open texture. Alder is found in Europe and North America.

ASH

A light cream coloured wood which may have some darker sections and possibly brown or black streaks. It has an open grain which may be quite wavy (figured). Ash is relatively hard and strong (it is often used for tool handles). It is found in Europe, North Africa North America and Western Asia.



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BAMBOO

Not actually wood, but a grass with a tensile strength comparable to steel. Bamboo stem have hollow cores which are split into strips and glue laminated together under high pressure to produce flat planks which look like solid wood flooring and have a very hard surface. Bamboo flooring can be purchased in a natural colour or stained to match various other wood colours.

Bamboo flooring behaves differently to solid wood and so special care must be taken to follow the manufacturer's installation instructions. Bamboo flooring mainly comes from China and the Far East.

BEECH

Strong and straight-grained, beech is a creamy coloured wood, sometimes with a pinky brown tinge. There is a distinctive fleck in the grain when the wood is sawn at right angles to the centre of the trunk. Beech can be stained to match other timber colours. It is grown in Europe and North America

BIRCH

A light cream to pale brown coloured timber with variable grain. Birch is grown in Europe and North America. It is fairly soft and can be prone to insect and fungal attack.

CEDAR

A silver-grey to pale brown coloured timber with straight grain and an aromatic smell (often used to repel moths when storing clothing) and a high degree of decay resistance. Cedar is grown around the world but flooring is mainly sourced from EU or North American varieties.

CHERRY

Pale pinky brown with variable grain and a fine even texture, cherry is fairly hard and durable. It grows in Europe and the Americas.

CHESTNUT

Looks very similar to Oak but without any "silver grain" and so is often mistaken for Oak or used as a substitute. It grows throughout Europe and North America, although a fungal disease

has affected many American trees. It can be stained to look like antique Oak or bleached to look like limed Oak.

CORK

From the outer bark of the cork Oak tree. Cork is a sustainable product as the bark regrows and can be harvested every 8-10 years. Grown around the Mediterranean and nearby Atlantic coastal region. Cork flooring is usually supplied in sheet form made from reconstituted cork. Impervious to water due to the interconnected honeycomb cell structure. Naturally resilient to insect attack and fire.

CYPRESS

A durable timber with close grain. Heartwood is honey-gold to red with darker knots throughout. Sapwood is darker cream.

DOUGLAS FIR

Native to North America but grown throughout the UK and EU, yellow to light brown in colour with straight grain with occasionally wavy or spiral texture. It is durable but relatively soft.

ELM

Used to be common throughout Europe and North America but has been seriously affected by Dutch Elm disease and so is now rarely used for flooring or furniture because supplies are limited. It is pale red/brown with a wavy grain structure and coarse texture.

MAHOGANY

Traditionally mahogany came from Africa or South America but in these regions it is now a protected species and true mahogany is not easily available. However, the term is used for many different tropical timbers which have a red-brown colouration and usually straight grain.

MAPLE

A silver, cream, smokey or honey coloured timber. It is dense and available in long lengths with very straight grain. Grown in Scandinavia and North America. Maple is used for sports flooring due to its toughness and strength. For domestic flooring it may be used in its natural colour or stained.



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OAK

There are some 450 species of Oak worldwide. Timber is creamy pink to pale red/brown and hard and tough. Grain is open and usually straight but can be wavy. When “quarter sawn” (i.e., cut at right angles to the centre of the trunk) Oak can show flashes of “silver grain”. EU, American and Japanese Oak are used for flooring.

PINE

A softwood, but can be slow grown to produce dense, close-grained timber. Durable, but not as resistant to indentations as many other timbers. Freshly cut pine is very pale in colour but quickly darkens when exposed to light to become a strong yellow/orange shade. Pine has a distinctive smell and can often be affected by resin pockets in the timber.

POPLAR

Also known as Aspen, Lombardy and Tulipwood. Light coloured with straight regular grain. Grown throughout Europe.

RUBBERWOOD

Also known as Hevea. Rubberwood is usually cut after rubber trees have exhausted their supply of latex. Grown in South America and other tropical regions. Very light when cut but quickly darkening to create a light brown timber with a pink tinge and straight grain. It can be stained to match other timber colours.

SPRUCE

Softwood, white to pale yellow/brown with a straight grain. Fairly soft but not very durable.

SYCAMORE

Native to central Europe and western Asia. Introduced to the UK in 15th century. No difference in colour between the heartwood and softwood. Generally white or yellow/white, with

no difference between the heartwood and sapwood. Straight grained but may be wavy.

TEAK

A very expensive timber which is renowned for its hardness and durability but which is now protected and difficult to obtain. Other timbers (such as Iroko) are often used as substitutes. It is grown in India, Malaysia, Africa, Central America and the Philippines.

It varies in colour from yellow/brown to brown, darkening as it ages. The grain is often straight but may be wavy, with a coarse and uneven texture. It is extremely durable and has good dimensional stability.

WALNUT

Traditionally, Walnut came from EU, America and Africa, with each continent producing its own distinct timber. Tropical hardwoods are now protected and so American and EU Walnuts have become more common.

Rich dark brown in colour with close, straight grain, it is very strong and moderately hard. Some varieties are noted for highly decorative figuring in the grain (e.g., Burr Walnut) which is used mainly for veneering.

NOTE: There are many other species of wood available, but these may not be available to use as flooring. The tables on the following four pages list most of the commercially available timbers and their places of origin, but their inclusion on this list does not mean you will be able to find them all as flooring products.

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WOOD SPECIES	COMMON NAMES	BINOMIAL NAME	LOCATION
Afzelia	Afa, Beyo, Doussie, Lingue, Papayo, Uvala	<i>Afzelia Africana</i>	Cameroon, Africa
Amendoim	Guiaro, Ibiraro, Pau Fava, Vivaro	<i>Pterogyne nitens</i>	Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay
Andiroba	Bateo, Carapa, Crabwood, Crappo, Figueroa, Masabalo, Tangere	<i>Carapa guianensis</i>	Central and Latin America
Angelim Pedra	Angelim da Tarra, Angelim da Mata, Caramate, Mirarema, Sapupira Amarela	<i>Hymenolobium petraeum</i>	Brazil
Ash, White	American Ash, Biltmore Ash, Canadian Ash, Fresno	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	North America
Bamboo, Chinese Timber		<i>Phyllostachys vivax</i>	Asia
Bamboo, Chinese Thorny		<i>Bambusa sinospinosa</i>	Asia
Bamboo, Japanese Timber		<i>Phyllostachys bambusoides</i>	Asia
Bamboo, Moso		<i>Phyllostachys pubescens</i>	Asia
Bamboo, Snakeskin		<i>Phyllostachys nigra</i>	Asia
Bamboo, Sweet Shoot		<i>Phyllostachys edulis</i>	Asia
Bangkirai	Anggelam, Balau, Benuas, Kumas, Penapak	<i>Shorea laevis</i>	Indonesia
Basswood	Beetree, Limetree, Linden, Linn	<i>Tilia americana</i>	USA, Canada
Beech	American beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	North America
Birch	Yellow birch, sweet birch, paper birch. Sweet birch is sometimes called "black birch" or "cherry birch"	<i>Betula spp.</i>	North America
Blackwood	Indian Rosewood, Java Palisandre, Malabar, Shisham, Sitsal, Sonokeling	<i>Dalbergia latifolia</i>	South east Asia
Bloodwood	Cardinal Wood, Conduru, Muirapiranga, Satine Rubane, Satine Rouge, Satinjout	<i>Brosimum rubescens</i>	South America (Brazil, French Guiana, Suriname)
Bocote	Canaletta, Cordia, Cype, Freijo, Louro, Princewood, Solera, Salmwood, Ziricote	<i>Cordia gerascanthus</i>	Tropical America and West Indies
Boire	African Walnut, Bibolo, Eyan, Lovoa, Nivero, Noy	<i>Lovoa trichilodes</i>	Africa
Boreal (Cottonwood)	Balm, Cottonwood, Hackmatack, Poplar, Tacamahac	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	Northern USA, Canada
Brazilian Redwood	Acana, Beefwood, Bolletri, Massaranduba, Nispero, Paraju, Red Balata	<i>Manilkara bidentata</i>	Central and South America
Brush Box	Pink Box, Scrub Box	<i>Lophostemon confertus</i>	Australia
Bubinga	African Rosewood, Buvenga, Essingang, Kevazingo, Ovang, Waka	<i>Guibourtia demeusei</i>	Central Africa
Cabreuva/Santos Mahogany	Balsamo del Peru, Cabreuva-vermelha, Estoraque, Olor, Sandalo	<i>Myroxylon peruiferum</i>	Central and South America
Cameron	Alazano, Camaron, Conejo, Degame, Guayabo, Harino, Lemonwood, Surra	<i>Samanea pedicellaris</i>	Southern Mexico and Central America
Eastern Red Cedar	Aromatic Cedar, Red Juniper	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Native to North and Central America, and the Old World
Black Cherry	American Cherry, North American Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	North America



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Plank, two-strip, and herringbone floors in a wide choice of colours and finishes

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Chestnut	American Chesnut, Chinkapin, Sweet Chesnut	<i>Castanea dentata</i>	North America
Cocobolo	Funera, Granadillo, Nambur, Nicaragua Rosewood, Palisandro, Palo Negro	<i>Dalbergia retusa</i>	Pacific regions of Central America, from Panama to south west Mexico
Coffee Bean	Chicot, Coffe nut, Coffetree, Kentucky Mahogany, Knicker Tree, Stump Tree	<i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	North America
Cork	Cork Oak	<i>Quercus suber</i>	Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mediterranean European Basin and nearby Atlantic coastal areas
Cottonwood	Balm, Balsam Poplar, Boreal, California Poplar, Tacamahac	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	Northern USA, Canada
Cumaru	Amburana, Brazilian Oak, Cumaru, Ishpingo, Roble	<i>Amborana cearensis</i>	Central and South America
Curupixa	Apixuna, Caimitillo, Grumixava, Hacano, Moroballi, Reimhout	<i>Micropholis venulosa</i>	Central and South America
Cypress, Australian	Cypress-Pine, Murray Pine, Murray River Pine, Murray River Cypress,	<i>Callitris glauca</i>	New South Wales and Queensland, Australia
Doussie	Afzelia, Afa, Beyo, Lingue, Papayo, Uvala	<i>Afzelia africana</i>	Africa – Cameroon
Ebony, African	Kanran, Kuku (Gambia), Mgriti, Msindi (Tanzania), Nyareti (Nigeria) Omenowa (Ghana)	<i>Diospyros spp.</i>	Equatorial West Africa
Eucalyptus, Brazilian	Flooded Gum, Rose Gum, Scrub Gum	<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i>	Australia
Goncalo Alves (or Tigerwood)	Gateado (Venezuela), Guarita (Brazil), Guasango (Ecuador), Gusanero (Colombia), Palo de Cera, Palo de Culebra (Mexico), Tigerwood	<i>Astronium spp.</i>	Upland forests of C. and S. America, incl. Peru Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Guatemala
Hemlock	Eastern/Canadian Hemlock, Hemlock Spruce	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Canada and USA
Hickory / Pecan	Bitter Pecan, Bitternut Hickory, Mockernut, Pecan Hickory, Pignut, Shagbark, Shellbark, Swamp Hickory, White Hickory	<i>Carya spp.</i>	North America
Imbuia (or Brazilian Walnut)	Canella Imbuia, Embuia, Embuya, Imbuia	<i>Phoebe porosa</i>	Southern Brazil
Ipe	Amapa, Cortez, Guayacan Polvillo, Flor Amarillo, Greenheart, Lapacho Negro, Madera Negra, Tahuari	<i>Tabebuia spp.</i>	Brazil, continental tropical America as well as parts of the Lesser Antilles
Jatoba (or Brazilian Cherry)	Algarrobo, Cuapinol, Guapinol, Jatahy, Kawanari, Paquico, Rode Locus, West Indian Locust	<i>Hymenaea courbaril</i>	From S. Mexico, throughout Central America and West Indies, to northern Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru
Kambala	Abang, Iroko, Lusagna, Moreira, Molundu, Odum, Semli	<i>Chlorophora excelsa</i>	Tropical Africa
Karri		<i>Eucalyptus diversicolor</i>	W. Australia and S. Africa
Kempas	Impas, Mengris, Thongbeung	<i>Koompassia malaccensis</i>	Malaysia and Indonesia
Lacewood	Silky Oak, Selano	<i>Cardwellia sublimia</i>	Australia
Lapacho	Brazilian Walnut, Cortez, Greenheart, Hakai, Ipe, Ironwood, Polvillo, Tabebuia, Tahua	<i>Tabebuia serratifolia</i>	Central and South America
Larch	Hackmatack, Tamarack	<i>Larix laricina</i>	Northern USA, Canada
Leopardwood	Brazilian Ironwood, Leopard Tree, Snakewood	<i>Flindersia maculosa</i>	Australia



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New Artis Plank & Herringbone Parquet Collection



Artis Parquet Oak Engineered 125x500x14*3, Available In 12 Custom Colours, Made In the UK Character Grade - Easy Fit Triple Groove One Tongue fitting System- Samples On request

TRADE Price Pack
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New Easy Triple Groove Fit x 12 Colours



Artis Plank (Click) Oak Engineered 190x1900x14*3, Available In 12 Custom Colours, Made In the UK Character Grade - Click Fit fitting System- Samples On request

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Easy Click Fit Long Plank x 12 Colours

XXL & New XL Magna Oak Collection



Magna Oak Engineered Plank Widths 190 & 260mm - Lengths 600-2800mm Mix Lengths x15*4, Available In 12 Custom Colours, Made In the UK - Character Grade - Samples On request

TRADE Price Pack
£37m² - 190

TRADE Price Pack
£44m² - 260

12 Unique Colours

Finesse Oak Plank & Herringbone Parquet



Option 1 125x500x14mm Finesse Oak Parquet Oak Engineered 125x500x14*3, Available Natural Tone UV Oiled Surface Finish. Character Grade - Easy Fit Triple Groove One Tongue fitting System- Samples On request

TRADE Price Pack
£27.m²

TRADE Price Pallets
£25.50m²



Option 2 80x400x10*2mm Finesse Oak Parquet Oak Engineered 80x400x10*2*, Available Natural Tone UV Oiled Surface Finish. Select Grade - Easy Fit Triple Groove One Tongue fitting System- Samples On request

TRADE Price Pack
£23.50m²

TRADE Price Pallets
£21.50.m²

Option 3 190x1900x14*3mm Finesse (Click) Oak Engineered 190x1900x14*3, Available In Natural Tone UV Oiled Surface Finish, Character Grade - Click Fit fitting System- Samples On request

TRADE Price Pack
£31.50m²

TRADE Price Pallets
£28.50m²

Pack & Pallet Price Offer

Locust	Black Locust, Yellow Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	USA, Canada
Mahogany, Santos	Balsamo, Cabriuva Vermelha, Cedro Chino, Chirracá, Estoraque, inciense, Nabal, Navo, Palo de Balsamo, Quina, Sandalo, Tache, Tolu	<i>Myroxylon balsamum</i>	Wide distribution from southern Mexico through central America to Argentina
Mahogany, Red	Australian Red Mahogany, Eucalipto, Kino Gum Eucalyptus	<i>Eucalyptus resinifera</i>	Australia
Makore	Abacu, Aganokwe, African Cherry, Baku, Douka, Okolla	<i>Tieghemella heckelii</i>	Africa
Maple (Sugar/Hard)	Bird's-eye Maple, Black Maple, Curly Maple, Hard Maple, Rock Maple, Rough Maple, Sugar Maple, Sweet Maple, Thumbnail Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>	Throughout most of North America
Purpleheart	Amaranth, Amarante, Guarabu, Koroborelli, Morado, Palo Morado, Pau Roxo, Purperhart, Tananeo, Violetwood	<i>Peltogyne spp.</i>	North-middle part of the Brazilian Amazon region of South America, and tropical regions of central America
Ribbon Gum	Manna Gum, Rough-Barked Manna Gum, Viminalis Gum, White Gum	<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	Australia
Rose River Gum	Flooded Gum, Rose Gum, Scrub Gum	<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i>	Australia
Bolivian Rosewood	Morado, Moradillo, Santos Palisander	<i>Machaerium schleroxylon</i>	South America (Bolivia and Brazil) and central America
Oak	Black Oak, Buck Oak, Canadian Red Oak, Common Red Oak, Gray Oak, Eastern Red Oak, Leopard Oak, Maine Red Oak, Mountain Med Oak, Northern Red Oak, Spanish Oak, Spotted Oak, Southern Red Oak, Swamp Red Oak, Water Oak, American white Oak (also known as Basket Oak, Chestnut Oak, Cow Oak, Mountain Oak, Rock Oak, Swamp Oak, Tanbark Oak)	<i>Quercus rubra (red Oak)/ Quercus alba (white Oak)</i>	
African Padauk	African Coralwood, Barwood, Bosulu, Comwood, Corail, Mbe, Mbil, Mtuti, Ngula, Vermillion, Yomo	<i>Pterocarpus soyauxii</i>	C. and tropical West Africa, esp. dense Equatorial rain forest regions
Paraju	Acana, Balata, Beefwood, Bulletwood, Macaranduba, Massarandu, Nispero, Pamashtu, Quinilla colourada, Red Balasta	<i>Manilkara bidentata</i>	Central and South America
Parana	Brazilian Pine, Curly, Parana Pine, Pin, Pinheiro do Brazil, Pinheiro do Parana, Pino Blanco	<i>Araucaria angustifolia</i>	South America
Pecan	Bitter Pecan, Hickory, Nogal Morado, Nuez Encarcelada, Pecan Hickory, Sweet Pecan	<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	USA
Peroba	Ipe Peroba, Peroba Branca, Peroba de Campos, White Peroba	<i>Paratecoma peroba</i>	Coastal Brazil
Pine	Pine (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>), Carribean (Heart) Pine (<i>Pinus caribaea</i>), Eastern White Pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>), Longleaf (Southern Yellow) Pine (<i>Pinus palustris</i>), Shortleaf (Southern Yellow) Pine (<i>Pinus echinata</i>), Western White Pine (<i>Pinus monticola</i>), Benguet Pine (<i>Pinus insularis</i>), Pitch Pine (<i>Pinus rigida</i>), Pond Pine (<i>Pinus serotina</i>), Ponderosa Pine (<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>), Scots Pine (<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>), Scrub Pine (<i>Pinus virginiana</i>), Slash Pine (<i>Pinus elliottii</i>), Spruce Pine (<i>Pinus glabra</i>)	<i>Pinus spp.</i>	North America into central America, as well as northern Europe and the former Soviet Republics
Pradoo	Burma, Padauk, Mai Pradoo, Pterocarpus	<i>Pterocarpus macrocarpus</i>	Southeast Asia

Movingui	Ayan Movingui, Ayanran, Barre, Bonsamdua, Eyen	<i>Distemonanthus benthamianus</i>	West Africa
Mindi	Alilaila, Bead Tree, Bois Rouge, Chinaberyr Tree, Chin Ling Tzu, Faux Sycamore, Gringging, Persian Lilac, Sen Shu, Sendan, Tamaga, Violeta, Zanzalakht	<i>Melia azederach</i>	North India and China's Himalayan region
Sakura	Cinese Birch, Indian Birch	<i>Betula albosinensis</i>	China
Sapele	Aboudikro, Libuyu, Muyovu, Penkwa, Sapelli, Sapelii	<i>Entandrophragma cylindricum</i>	West and East Africa, from the Ivory Coast to the Cameroons and eastward through Zaire to Uganda
Satinwood	Aceitillo, Bois Noyer, Bois Noyes, Espinillo, Jamaican Satinwood, Kalabarie, Pau Amarello, Prickly Ash, Yellow Sanders, Yellow Wood, Yellowheart	<i>Zanthoxylum flavum or Euxylophora paraensis</i>	Southern Florida to Brazil
Shedua	Daniellia, Eyhedua, Fara, Faro, Gum Copal, Incenso, Nsou, Ogea, Oziya	<i>Daniella thurifera</i>	Africa
Spotted Gum	Spotted Iron Gum, Lemon-Scented Gum	<i>Eucalyptus maculata</i>	Australia
Sycamore	American Planetree, Buttonball Tree, Buttonwood, Planetree	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	Canada and Northern to mid-Southern America
Sydney Blue	Sydney Blue Gum	<i>Eucalyptus saligna</i>	Australia
Tallowwood	Australian Tallow Wood	<i>Eucalyptus microcorys</i>	Australia
Tasmanian Oak	Messmate Stringybark, Brown-Top Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus delegatensi/ Eucalyptus regnans/ Eucalyptus oblique</i>	Australia
Teak	Burma Teak, Djati, Genuine Teak, Gia Thi, Jati Sak, Kyun, Mai Sal, Pahi, Rangoon Teak, Rosawa, Sagon, Sagwan, Tadi, Teca, Teck, Tegara, Tekku, Tik, Tsik	<i>Tectona grandis</i>	Indonesia
Tigerwood	Bois de Zebre, Bossona, Goncalo Alves, Mura, Kingwood, Urunday-Para, Zebrawood, Zorrownod	<i>Astronium fraxinifolium</i>	Latin America, mainly Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.
Timborana	Angelium, Angico, Batibatra, Coumarouna odorata, Cobi, Jebio, Galondrino, Harino, Hevio, Menudito, Timbauba, Yiguire	<i>Pseuodiptadenia psilostachya or Enterolobium schomburgkii</i>	Central America and Brazil
Tualang	Deoh, Honey Bee Tree, Kayu Rajah, Mengaris, Manggis, Menggeris, Tapang	<i>Koumpassia excelsa</i>	South east Asia
Turpentine	Luster, Turpentine Tree	<i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i>	Australia
American Black Walnut	American Walnut, Black Walnut, Burbank Walnut, Eastern Black Walnut, Eastern Walnut, Gunwood, North American Walnut, Virginia Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Native to eastern USA
Wenge	Awong, Mpande, Panga-panga	<i>Milletia spp.: Milletia laurentii (wenge), milletia stuhlmannii (panga-panga), stuhlmannii (panga-panga)</i>	Central Africa especially throughout the Congo and southern regions of Tanzania and Mozambique
Zebrawood	Allen Ele, Zebrano, Zingana	<i>Microberlinia brazzavillensis</i>	West central Africa, mainly Gabon and Cameroon

PHYSICALITIES

Wood flooring comes with a variety of types of surface finish, or unfinished. Oils and waxes, lacquers and resin-based finishes can be used to provide surface protection, in a choice of gloss levels to suit the customer.

A key advantage of timber flooring is that it can be refurbished by sanding and refinishing. This reduces the thickness of the planks and so can only be done a limited number of times depending on the thickness of the top layer. All timbers used should come from sustainable resources.

Wood is hygroscopic and its moisture content changes with its environment. It expands in width and thickness with increases in moisture content, the greatest amount of expansion being in the direction of the annular (growth) rings. This can mean significant changes in moisture content can cause warping and cupping due to the curvature of these rings. It is essential to take this potential movement into account when installing wood and wood-based flooring.

Where seasonal temperature and humidity changes may be large (e.g., over UFH) the choice of flooring should be considered carefully to ensure the product is suitable for the expected conditions.

Wood flooring includes natural colour and grain variations within and between the boards in a batch, and between batches. Wood also changes colour when exposed to light over a period of time. There may be knots, cracks (shakes) and other natural defects in the surface depending on the grade, and these may be left unfilled or filled with a matching or complementing filler to provide a smooth surface.

TYPES OF TIMBER FLOORING

WOOD MOSAIC PANELS

Mosaic panels are made from short, narrow strips of solid wood bonded to a backing membrane in a chequerboard pattern. They are

supplied in tiles to enable a strip wood floor to be installed quickly and precisely. They are available in a variety of timbers, are relatively cheap and have a good resistance to wear.

Mosaic panels are available in felt-backed, mesh-backed, or paper-backed versions, or with a paper face to protect the surface during fitting. They are usually pre-sanded for easy installation using adhesive.

WOOD BLOCKS

Block flooring is made from softwood or hardwood blocks with the grain running parallel to the surface and are fitted individually. They can either be square edged or have an interlocking edge profile, such as tongues and grooves. Available in various species, they are usually 200-500mm long, not more than 90mm wide, not less than 20mm deep, with 9mm of wearing thickness above any interlocking profiles.

They can be laid in patterns such as single or double herringbone, single or double basket weave, straight or diagonal brick, etc. They are usually stuck down and finished on site.

Some geometric shapes are available to create patterns. These blocks have grooves on all sides and are joined by thin wood battens.

PARQUET BATTENS

Parquet battens have a top wear layer with the grain perpendicular to the surface of the board and, for this reason, are sometimes called end-grain blocks. These are most commonly available in Oak with finished sizes of 300 or 225 × 75 × 6mm. Other sizes/timbers are available in order to produce a wider choice of patterns.

STRIP FLOORING

Strip flooring is similar to block flooring, with the grain running parallel to the board surface. It is manufactured in a variety of sizes and is usually supplied in random lengths with a T&G groove edge profile. There are a variety of fixing methods, including secret nailing, adhesive fixing and floating. For some uses, usually

commercial and sports, these boards may be fixed to battens on flexible pads or foam to provide a sprung floor.

Some larger flooring boards are made up of shorter, narrower strips glued together to create the same appearance as strip flooring, whilst making installation easier.

OVERLAY STRIPS

Similar to strip flooring except the thickness is 12mm nominal. They are generally used in housing and installed directly on to existing softwood boarded floors, chipboard or plywood, at right angles to the existing floor. If the existing subfloor is covered with plywood or similar, the overlay can be laid in any direction.

ENGINEERED FLOORING

Engineered wood flooring has a top layer of solid wood bonded to a plywood base board or layers of cheaper wood, each laid at right angles to the layer above and below. There is also a variant with a high-density fibreboard core with a top decorative veneer and a balancing veneer on the underside.

The layering improves the stability of the boards and makes them more resistant to changes caused by humidity variations in the environment but, as with all timber flooring, engineered boards are still susceptible to moisture rising from the subfloor.

The top layer may be made from smaller pieces of solid wood to create a strip wood or mosaic/parquet pattern. In all cases, the top layer must be a minimum of 2.5mm thick (*BS 8201:2011*).

BAMBOO

Bamboo is not wood but is supplied in planks like block and strip flooring. It is actually a grass with a tensile strength comparable to steel. The bamboo stem is split into strips which are then glued together under high pressure to produce a flat plank which is left in its natural colour, or stained to a variety of colours to simulate wood shades.

Installing bamboo flooring has many similarities to installing wood flooring but as it has different characteristics to wood it is excluded from *BS 8201:2011* and the manufacturer's instructions must be followed.

INSTALLING WOOD AND ENGINEERED WOOD FLOORING

The installation of timber flooring is covered by *BS 8201:2011 Code of practice for installation of flooring of wood and wood-based panels*. Installers should familiarise themselves with the requirements of this standard and the specific installation instructions for the product they are fitting.

NOTE: This Standard does not cover bamboo flooring (see the note above) and laminate flooring is covered separately in Section 10.

SITE CONDITIONS

The property should be at normal temperature and humidity levels, ideally between 18-27°C and with a floor temperature of no less than 10°C. The moisture content of the subfloor must be $\leq 75\%$ RH (if the flooring instructions state a different RH or state the requirements in different units such as %MC or %CM this must be complied with). If the subfloor has a higher moisture content, then the manufacturer's recommendations for dealing with this should be followed.

Atmospheric moisture content should be kept between 35-55% RH during installation. Any stated setting, drying or curing times assume optimum conditions.

The subfloor should be sound, smooth, level and dry. The subfloor should be tested for compliance by the flooring installer and the installation should only proceed if these requirements

are met or will be corrected as part of the installation process. **Refer to Section Four for further details.**

In a domestic project, especially where no other works are being carried out in the property, it is the flooring installers responsibility to carry out the subfloor checks as the homeowner is unlikely to have the equipment or expertise to do this.

UNDERFLOOR HEATING

Where UFH (underfloor heating) is present in the subfloor, the installer should check that the flooring is considered suitable for use with UFH, and that the type of UFH is compatible with wood flooring.

During the summer or when the heat is turned off for long periods, high atmospheric humidity will cause an increase in the moisture content of wood flooring which had been specially kiln dried for heated conditions. This will produce lifting if the floor is too tightly jointed at the time of installation.

When the heat is turned on again, the moisture content will decrease. Therefore, greater seasonal moisture content variation is to be expected with UFH than other forms of heating.

The UFH should already have been commissioned but should be turned off prior to, during, and after the installation for the time periods specified by the flooring manufacturer.

ACCLIMATISATION

All wood and wood-based flooring must be acclimatised in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions prior to installation. Materials should be stored in the area where the flooring is to be laid with the property at normal operating conditions.

If the site conditions are not operational or are not at the recommended temperatures and humidity levels, once the flooring is installed it will expand or contract and this may cause the flooring to fail.

METHODS OF INSTALLATION

There are three main methods of installing wood and wood-based panel floors: mechanical fixing, adhesion (stick down) and floating. There are also some proprietary installation systems such as clip systems to attach boards to battens and self-adhesive underlay for floating floors. Not all of these methods are suitable for every product and the manufacturer's recommendations must be followed.

All installation methods for wood flooring incorporate provisions for the flooring to expand and contract with changes in temperature and humidity. Any restriction on the ability of wood flooring to expand is likely to cause problems and to damage the flooring and the obstacles restricting the expansion.

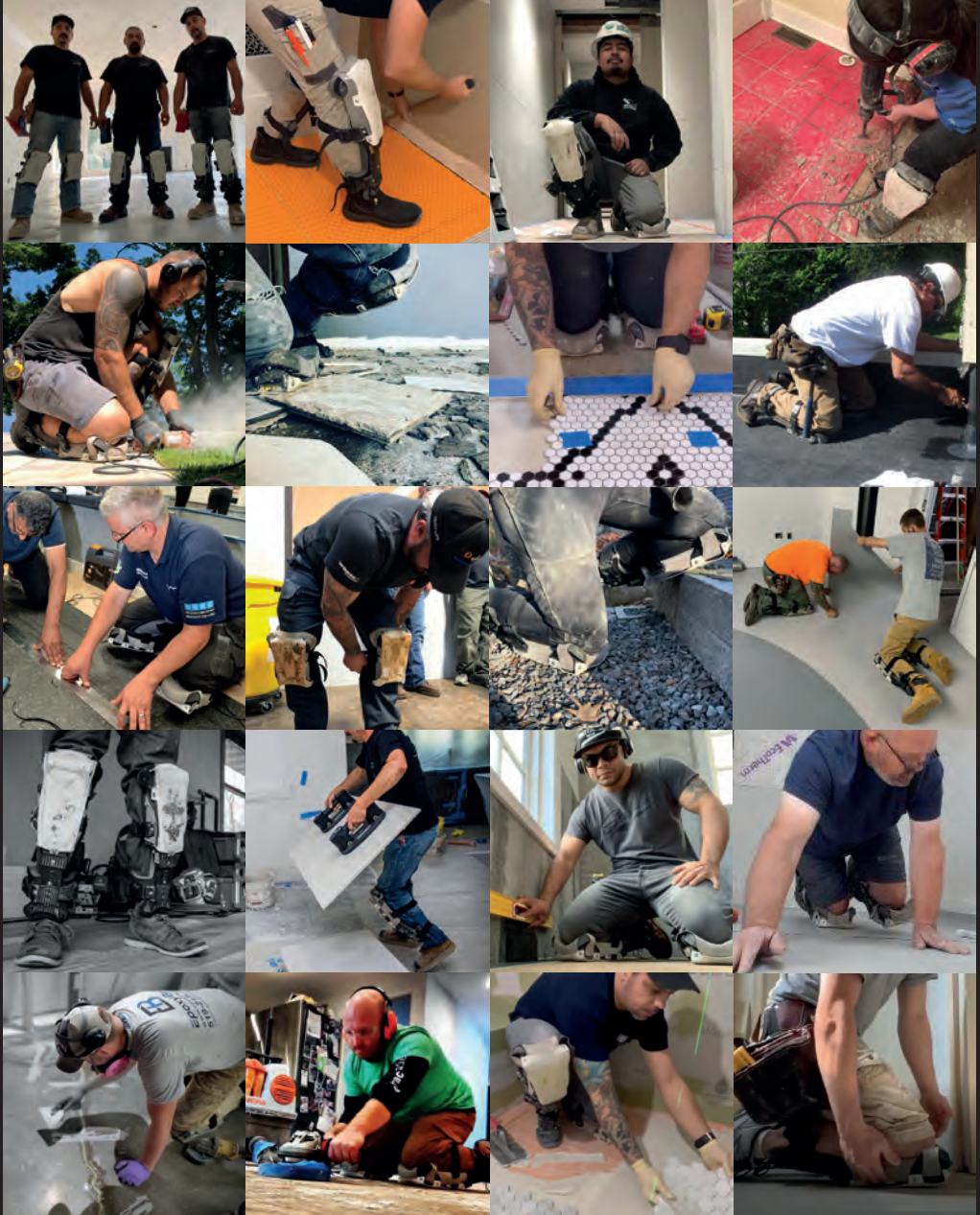
It is good practice to intermix the flooring panels from several packs as installation proceeds to even out any colour variations across the floor.

1. Mechanical fixing

- Wood flooring can be mechanically fixed to timber joists, existing timber floors, or to battens either by face-fixing or secret nailing through the tongue of tongue and groove flooring.
- There are also proprietary fixing systems such as clips. Staples may be used, but only where this is specifically approved by the flooring manufacturer.
- Battens may be used. These should be securely fixed to the subfloor, at least 36mm wide and thick (deep) enough to accommodate the length of the fixings to be used to secure the flooring.
- The spacing of these battens will depend on the intended use of the flooring and the size of the flooring panels. The batten ends must be staggered and not in line with each other in adjacent rows.
- The fixings should be of the type and size recommended by the manufacturer. The flooring must be fixed to every joist or

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 CANADA Patent Number 2617769, 2895405. EUROPEAN Patent Number 2941136

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batten, or when laying over existing sub-floors, at centres appropriate to the type of product.

- Care must be taken not to damage the wood flooring when fixing, especially within 50mm of the end of the boards or strips.
- Wide boards (over 100mm across the face) require intermediate fixings, besides secret nailing.
- Non-timber subfloors should be overlaid with a vapour check membrane before installing timber battens or wood flooring.
- Where provision for expansion is required in the body of the flooring, spacer washers should be used to prevent the boards or strips from closing up during the installation process.
- When using a proprietary system, such as clips, the manufacturer's instructions should be followed.

2. Adhesion (stick-down)

- Where recommended by the flooring manufacturer, wood flooring may be installed using a suitable adhesive. This may be applied across the entire floor surface using the appropriate notched trowel or in lines by using a cartridge gun and tube of adhesive where the manufacturer recommends this.
- Care must be taken to observe the recommendations for the spread, open time and curing time of the adhesive and to work systematically, spreading only as big an area as can be laid within the working time of the adhesive.

3. Floating

- Floating floors are not fixed to the subfloor but the panels are glued or interlocked together to create a single "raft" of flooring that expands and contracts as a whole. This system is not suitable for all wood flooring and the manufacturer's instructions must be followed.
- Some wood flooring products have interlocking edge profiles that allow the boards to be fitted together without the need for

adhesives. Others have a tongue and groove edge profile to be used with adhesive and the product instructions will specify what adhesive is to be used and how it is to be applied. When laying an unfinished flooring product, adhesive should not be allowed to come into contact with the face of the boards as this will affect any surface finish applied to the boards.

- Self-adhesive underlays are available for floating floors and may be specified by the flooring manufacturer. These underlays have adhesive on the top side only so the flooring is bonded to the underlay but is still able to "float", i.e., to expand and contract freely as a whole unit. If suitable, the manufacturer's installation instructions should be followed.

FINISHING

Unfinished wood flooring generally requires finishing after installation to protect the surface from contamination and staining. The performance of the flooring can depend on the choice of finishing product used, the number of coats and the thickness of the application.

Unfinished timber floors will require sanding with a drum or belt floor sanding machine using different grades of abrasive from coarse to fine to provide a smooth surface without residual sanding marks which would show up after the finish has been applied.

NOTE: Spontaneous ignition can occur with sanding dust, so it's vital that a good extraction system is used and that the dust is disposed of safely. Some timbers produce toxic sawdust and so appropriate PPE should be used.

All finishes should be applied strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and it is the responsibility of the installer to ensure that all current Health and Safety regulations are being observed.



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SEALING AND POLISHING

The choice of finishes available for flooring is considerable and manufacturer's guidelines regarding the suitability of their products should be taken into account.

It is also important to note that each finish will differ in its final look depending on the wood it is being applied to, so testing is always important and checking the result with the customer is also a good step. It is also important to consider the environmental impact of the chosen finish and the disposal of any waste.

SOLVENT BASED PRODUCTS

TRADITIONAL WAXES

These impart good wax colour, usually giving a deep, even finish. They are not affected by any natural movement in the timber and are easy to repair, but conversely they require a lot of maintenance to keep the finish buffed to an even sheen.

When sanding and refinishing a floor, traces of wax can cause problems by affecting the new finish as it is applied. Sanding must be thorough and there are priming treatments available to reduce the likelihood of a problem.

TRADITIONAL OIL FINISHES

Oils soak into most timber surfaces and impart a good colour, though some very dense and oily timbers may not absorb the finish as well. The sheen level will depend on the chosen product and a wide variety of sheens are available.

Oils are not affected by natural movement in the timber and can be replenished by applying new over old with minimal preparation, unless the surface is dirty or damaged. Some oil finishes can take a long time to dry and fully harden. Be aware that oil residues can affect the surface when refinishing, especially when changing to a different kind of finish.

HARDWAX OIL

Similar to traditional oils but have added resins to improve application/drying, durability and both water and chemical resistance.

OLEO-RESINOUS SEALS

These penetrate the timber very well and are easy to use. They have similar wear and chemical resistance to hardwax oils but give a deeper "build" on the surface. They are comparatively slow to dry and harden. They allow for the natural movement of timber and are usually glossy but have a lower durability than some other finishes.

OIL MODIFIED POLYURETHANE AND URETHANE OIL

These are similar in appearance and method of use to oleo-resinous seals, but have significantly improved hardness, chemical resistance and durability. They are available in a wide range of gloss levels and are easy to maintain, but they do require frequent maintenance.

SOLVENT-BASED MOISTURE-CURING POLYURETHANE

These give excellent durability and chemical resistance, combined with a high build. However, they are not as flexible as other finishes and so can be affected by movement in the timber and for this reason are not recommended for use on new wood. They are usually glossy and require little maintenance, but they are not in general use for flooring.

ACID CATALYSED LACQUER

These are fast-drying and durable finishes but are not as durable as polyurethane-based finishes. They are available in a wide range of gloss levels and are generally easy to maintain, but due to the VOC emission rules, water-based products with similar or better characteristics are usually preferred.

WATER BASED PRODUCTS

Polyurethane and PU/acrylic blends and copolymers (Single pack)

These products are low-odour and often are odourless, making them popular with end users. They are fast-drying and fast-curing with good hardness, durability and chemical resistance.

There are many different products available and amongst the features to look out for are improved UV resistance, flexibility or hardness. Some will require the use of a primer when used on certain timbers, so it is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

TWO-PACK POLYURETHANES

These products have two components which are mixed together to start the chemical reaction that sets and hardens the lacquer. The result is an extremely hard and durable finish with excellent chemical resistance and good UV stability.

Care should be taken to ensure the product is mixed in usable quantities only, as the lacquer will harden in the pot quicker than it will harden on the floor due to heat generated by the chemical reaction. Plus the product needs to be used up within the pot-life stated by the manufacturer.

A primer may be necessary on some timbers and the lacquer may be affected by movement in the timber.

MAINTENANCE

Customers should be provided with the appropriate product and maintenance information to allow them to care for, and maintain, the flooring surface correctly. This should include guidance on the use of felt pads or other protection on chair legs, etc., how to clean the surface and what to do in the event of accidental spillages or surface damage/scratching. It can also include information to help when the floor eventually needs refinishing. ■



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GENERAL

Laminate flooring was originally produced with a chipboard substrate, a melamine laminate wear surface and tongue-and-grooved joints for glued installation as a floating floor. Modern laminate flooring is made from high-density fibreboard with a melamine wear surface and interlocking edge profiles, that can be fitted without the use of adhesive. Some laminate flooring have textured surfaces that simulate wood grain, and for tile-effect designs, that simulate the grout lines.

High-density fibreboard, which forms the core of laminate flooring, is made from highly compressed wood fibres mixed with a small amount of resin. It is a more compressed version of MDF (medium-density fibreboard) but uses different resins to improve its suitability for flooring use.

Like all wood-based materials, laminate flooring is moisture sensitive and will expand and contract with changes in environmental conditions. Unlike solid timber, laminate flooring expands

in length as well as width, so provision for expansion is necessary all around the flooring.

If liquids are spilled along the joint lines, or the product is wet cleaned, moisture will be drawn into the joints and ingress into the core material causing uneven swelling (bubbling) along the joint lines.

Some laminate flooring is made using moisture-resistant materials that are suitable for areas where the flooring may become wet. These boards still expand and contract with changes in ambient temperature and humidity but are more resistant to spillages and moisture ingress. There are also joint sealants which may be used on standard laminate flooring to improve the moisture resistance of the joints.

INSTALLING LAMINATE FLOORING

Laminate flooring is usually supplied with installation instructions on or in the packs and these must be followed. *BS 8425* has been withdrawn, and so there is currently no applicable British Standard, but this matter is being reviewed, and it is possible that UK guidelines will be published during the lifetime of this edition of the *NICF Guide to Domestic Flooring*.

Laminate flooring is always fitted as a floating floor. Heavy objects, including fitted kitchen units, must not be installed on top of the flooring as these will prevent free movement as the flooring expands and contracts with changes in humidity and temperature.

SITE CONDITIONS

The property should be at normal temperature and humidity levels, ideally between 18-27°C and with a floor temperature of no less than 15°C. The moisture content of the subfloor must be ≤75% RH (if the flooring instructions state a different RH this must be complied with). If the subfloor has a higher moisture content, then the manufacturer's recommendations for dealing with this should be followed.

Atmospheric moisture content should be kept between 35-55% RH. Any stated setting, drying or curing times assume optimum conditions.

The subfloor should be sound, smooth, level and dry. The requirements of BS 8425:2003 or the manufacturer's instructions must be met.

The subfloor should be tested for compliance by the flooring installer and the installation should only proceed if these requirements are met, or will be corrected as part of the installation process. **Refer to Section Four for further details.**

In a domestic project, especially where no other works are being carried out in the property, it is the flooring installers responsibility to carry out the subfloor checks as the homeowner is unlikely to have the equipment or expertise to do this.

The edge profiles (joints) of laminate flooring are intended to hold the boards together from side to side. They are not strong enough to hold the boards together vertically. For example, where there are hollows in the subfloor, any such hollows or unevenness in the subfloor must be rectified before the flooring is installed.

UNDERFLOOR HEATING

Where UFH (underfloor heating) is present in the subfloor, the installer should check that the flooring is considered suitable for use with UFH, and that the type of UFH is compatible with laminate flooring.

Many laminate flooring products must not be used over electric UFH systems, or such systems must be covered with a minimum depth (usually 9-12 mm) of smoothing compound, and this compound should be laid in two layers so the first layer holds the wires and prevents them floating to the subfloor surface.

The UFH should already have been commissioned but should be turned off prior to, during and after the installation for the time periods specified by the flooring manufacturer.

Specialist underlays are available for use under laminate flooring where there is UFH. These provide better flow of heat to the flooring surface. Normal laminate flooring underlays may be too resistant to the flow of heat and therefore may be unsuitable for use over UFH.

ACCLIMATISATION

All laminate flooring must be acclimatised in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions prior to installation. The packs should be stored in the area where the flooring is to be laid with the site at normal operating conditions for the minimum period specified by the manufacturer.

INSTALLATION

1. An underlay should always be used with Laminate floors. Laminate underlays are commonly made from expanded polystyrene foam or fibreboard. Over solid subfloors (e.g., concrete, anhydrite), a DPM (damp-proof membrane) between the subfloor and the underlay, or built-in to the underlay, is also recommended.
2. Laminate flooring should not be fitted over carpets, carpet underlay or existing laminate or floating floors.
3. The layout of the flooring, including the direction of the boards and the positioning of joints, should be considered before installation begins and should be agreed with the customer.
4. The end joints of the rows of flooring should be laid in a random pattern with the joints at least 200mm apart in adjacent rows (or as recommended by the flooring manufacturer), and short pieces less than 200mm in length should not be used at the start or end of rows.
5. Rows may be cut down in width at the sides of the fitted area, but should not be less than 50mm wide.
6. Many installers strive to achieve a 50:50 brick-bond arrangement with the header joints, but this creates lines of weakness across the flooring which can result in joint problems that would not have affected a randomly laid pattern.
7. Several packs of the flooring should be intermixed as the installation progresses to ensure the boards of similar pattern are not fitted together and the colour mix varies across the flooring.
8. Expansion gaps should be left all around the perimeter of the flooring and around all intermediate obstacles, including pipes running into the floor, fitted kitchen units and end panels, newel posts and other features.
9. Additional expansion breaks should be fitted at every doorway and, as necessary, to ensure that the fitted area does not exceed the maximum length and/or width recommended by the flooring manufacturer.
10. The expansion gaps should not be filled with cork, sealant or other material, and may be covered with skirting boards or beading (scotia) which must be fitted to the walls and not to the flooring, leaving the flooring free to move.
11. Silicone sealant should not be used around laminate or other floating floors. Although it is flexible, it does not allow the flooring to move forwards and backwards during expansion and contraction, and so will cause compression damage to the joints even if expansion gaps have been left.
12. Kitchen furniture and other fixed objects should not be fitted on top of a floating floor as they will also restrict the natural expansion and contraction of the flooring.
13. Architraves, door frames and some other features may be undercut to allow the flooring to be fitted underneath with the expansion gap hidden out of sight. When fitting up to an undercut, the locking profile of the flooring may be trimmed to allow the flooring panel to be inserted into the undercut and then pulled back against the fitted flooring using adhesive to hold the panel in place.
14. Edge profiles are available to allow for expansion where flooring meets other types of flooring, or to provide an edge where the flooring is not fitted against a wall. ■

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TEXTILE FLOORING TYPES

There are various textile flooring types which include woven and tufted carpets, natural and flatwoven floorcoverings and carpet tiles.

WOVEN CARPETS AXMINSTER

A traditionally woven carpet that takes its name from the town of Axminster in Devon, where these carpets were first produced. It is usually patterned and may have up to 30 different coloured yarns incorporated into the weave.

There are two different types of loom used to produce these carpets:

1. **Spool Axminster**
This provides the highest number of colour options, but the setting these machines up is time-consuming and expensive.
2. **Gripper Axminster**
This has a more limited range of colours, usually up to eight. The tufts of the pile are "U" shaped and are held in place by weft yarns (shots) made from Jute.



ABOVE: Our Beyond wool collection comprises of loop and twist pile carpets that look and feel like real wool but with the added benefits of durability and easy care. Recent additions to this collection, Amesbury and Castlerigg, are our first carpet ranges manufactured using 100% recycled polypropylene yarn. Amesbury and Castlerigg are Class 33, suitable for heavy domestic and commercial environments. Visit www.furlongflooring.com

Both types of loom produce high quality, heavy cloth which may be supplied as “body” carpet (27 inches wide) or broadloom carpet (full roll).

WILTON

Wilton carpets are also made using a traditional weaving process. The pile yarn is incorporated into the woven backing and the number of colours that can be used is more limited, usually up to five. The pile can be cut or looped and varied in height to create patterned textures.

Some modern Wilton looms are able to produce two broadloom carpets face-to-face at the same time, with a knife slitting the two carpets apart. High volume production using synthetic yarns is possible on these machines.

FLATWOVEN CARPETS

These carpets are woven like a fabric and so they have a textured surface with the yarn lying flat, which passes under and over weft yarns with no upright pile. Some flatweaves may



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have a backing. Although primarily a method of producing rugs, flatweaves are available for wall-to-wall fitting.

Special care must be taken to stop any cut edges fraying by applying or spraying a sealer/adhesive to the backing before cutting, and to cut edges. These carpets are not suitable for stretch-fitting but may be fitted over underlay without stretching, or by using the stick down or double-stick method.

TUFTED CARPETS

Tufted carpets are made by “stitching” multiple lines of pile yarn into a pre-made backing cloth – the primary backing. The spacing between the needles is known as the “gauge” of the carpet, higher gauges producing denser pile.

The tufts are held in place with adhesive which is spread over the primary backing and

a secondary backing is laid into the adhesive. The secondary backing may be of hessian, synthetic fabric, foam or felt.

Many variations are possible in the tufting process including cut pile, loop-pile, variable heights and patterns created using needle bars which move sideways during the tufting process.

Tufted carpets in certain fibres can also be dyed and/or printed to give colours and patterns. The printing is usually visible at the tips of the pile only and does not penetrate through the pile to the backing like on a patterned woven carpet.

Woven and tufted carpets are often described by the pile finish, and typical terms used are:

- **BERBER:** Originally a specific type of loop-pile carpet in undyed wool, this term is now generally used to describe any flecked beige loop-pile carpet.

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- **BRUSSELS:** A loop-pile which can be flat or have a varied height “cobbled” effect.
- **BURIED END:** Low and high pile yarn together to create a textured effect.
- **FRIEZE:** Tightly twisted yarn creating a “bobbly” appearance.
- **PLUSH:** Relatively sparse pile yarn cut to one length with a velvet-like surface.
- **SAXONY:** Medium pile length with tight tuft ends.
- **SHADOW:** Unstructured random patterning printed onto cut and loop-pile.
- **SHAG PILE:** Long pile length (20-50mm), tends to lie flat.
- **TIP SHEARED:** Made with differing loop heights with the higher loops cut through.
- **TWIST:** Carpet made from yarn with a good amount of twist to improve resilience (creates resistance to underfoot crushing and flattening).
- **VELOUR:** Tufted carpet with a short dense pile and smooth surface finish.
- **VELVET:** Woven carpet with short dense pile and smooth surface finish.

NEEDLEPUNCH CARPETS

Needlepunch (or needlefelt) carpets are produced by rapidly moving needles punching loose fibres through a backing. The felted surface may be smooth or ribbed (corded).

BONDED CARPETS

Bonded carpets are made by fixing the pile onto the backing using a heat sensitive bonding material. It may be referred to as fibre or fusion bonded carpet.

CARPET TILES

Carpet tiles consist of a semi-rigid backing made from pvc, rubber, bitumen or other material, with a twist pile, loop-pile, needlefelt or bonded pile surface. They are mainly used for commercial floors but can be used in domestic locations. They are popular for use in kitchens

where their interchangeability allows soiled or damaged tiles to be replaced.

NATURAL FLOORCOVERINGS

These floorcoverings are made from natural fibres and are usually flatwoven. Natural fibres are moisture sensitive, so the humidity of the environment needs to be considered and the products need to be fully acclimatised and fitted with the room at its normal operating conditions. Cut edges need protection from fraying.

Some of the most common types of natural floorcoverings are:

- **ABACA:** Related to the banana plant, this silky fibre is spun into yarns which are woven to form floorcoverings.
- **COIR:** From the husk of the coconut, this coarse fibre has traditionally been used for doormats. It is now used to create durable floorcoverings suitable for areas of high usage.
- **JUTE:** A fine and soft fibre used for making hessian and still used for backing some carpets. As a floorcovering in its own right, it is best suited for light usage.
- **SEAGRASS:** A strong fibre, spun into yarns for weaving into flooring. Suitable for most areas in the home except for stairs (unless otherwise recommended by the manufacturer).
- **SISAL:** Traditionally used for making ropes, has natural strength and is hard wearing, so it is suitable for all areas of the home.

Natural floorcoverings are installed in a similar way to other textile floorcoverings but special care is needed to prevent the edges fraying. Cut edges should be sealed to prevent fraying, so patience is required to ensure a good finish.

Blind gripper can be used if fitting over an underlay to create a tucked edge finish. There are further notes below in **Section 12.** ■



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GENERAL

The installation of textile floorcoverings is covered by *BS 5325:2021 Installation of textile floorcoverings – Code of practice* and flooring installers should familiarise themselves with the requirements of this standard.

There are three main methods of installing textile floorcoverings:

1. Stretch-fit

This is the single-most common method for installing domestic carpets. The carpet is fitted over an underlay and then held under tension by gripper fixed around the perimeter. Some carpets (notably felt-backed) can be fitted using this method, but without stretching the carpet.

2. Direct-stick / permanent bond

This method is used for certain types of floorcoverings and carpet tiles. The floorcovering is bonded directly to the subfloor using a permanent or tackifier adhesive.

3. Double-stick

This method is usually a contract-fitting method, but is preferable in some domestic locations, such as home offices or for natural floorcoverings. This method requires the use of an underlay specifically intended for double-stick installations. The underlay is stuck to the subfloor using a tackifier adhesive and the floorcovering is then stuck to the underlay using a permanent adhesive. Blind (unpinned) gripper can be used to create a tucked edge finish.

Where a floorcovering is thicker than the previous one is being installed, it may be necessary to trim the doors to accommodate the thicker floorcovering. This should be considered at the estimating stage, as it may require additional cost or the engagement of a specialist contractor to do the work.

Where there is the possibility of draughts blowing around skirting boards or through gaps between floorboards paper underfelt should be used and the gap underneath skirting boards should be sealed.

Sections of the paper underfelt should be overlapped or taped which will provide continuous protection. This should be considered at the estimating stage, due to the cost and extra time that this will require.

STRETCH-FIT INSTALLATION

A wide choice of underlays is available for stretch-fit installations; the right one will improve comfort underfoot, reduce noise and improve thermal insulation, as well as prevent premature wear. Prices varies considerably for different types, so the right balance between price and performance will need to be considered.

For heavy use areas, such as stairs, the underlay must be capable of giving long-lasting support to the carpet. Using a cheap underlay will usually prove to be a false economy.

FITA (Flooring Industry Training Association) runs regular short courses in Carpet Fitting, at all levels up to Master Fitter, and includes modules on stairs at their training centres at Loughborough and Kirkcaldy. **Visit www.fita.co.uk**

Underlay that has already been in use will offer less resilience and support in the most used areas of the installation. This will cause these areas to flatten and show wear much more quickly under a new carpet. Therefore, it is not good practice to reuse a customer's existing underlay for these reasons.

Some of the various types of underlay that are available include:

- **FELT:** One of the first types of underlay to be used. Made from recycled or waste yarn. Available in different weights and thicknesses.
 - **CRUMB RUBBER:** Made from recycled tyres with a scrim on one surface. Dimensionally stable and suitable for high traffic areas including stairs, but firm when compared to some other types of underlay. Available in various thicknesses. Prone to crumbling when cut if sharp blades or shears are not used. Also available in a combination underlay with felt on one side.
 - **SPONGE RUBBER:** Made using chemical agents to produce an open-cell foam structure and produced in flat or waffle sheets in different thicknesses.
 - **POLYURETHANE (PU) FOAM:** Made from recycled PU foam chips chemically bonded together in a mould and then sliced into sheets to the required thickness. Available in various densities and thicknesses, and usually with a netting or film on one surface to improve handling strength and to allow the floorcovering to slide more easily during fitting. This type of underlay may have small hard lumps in it due to the hard skins and glue lines of some of the foam waste products used in its manufacture.
1. Carpet gripper should be installed around the perimeter of the room and around any intermediate obstacles such as pillars or pipes. The gap between the front angled edge of the gripper and the walls should be approximately two-thirds of the thickness of the carpet with a minimum of 4mm and maximum of 10mm.



ABOVE: On stairs, the gripper should be the full width of the stairs and placed twice the thickness of the carpet away from the tread and riser where the tread and riser meet, if the carpet is being fitted as a continuous run.

2. For saxonies, shag piles and other long pile carpets, this measurement should be just sufficient to hold the carpet backing and roots of the pile securely.
3. The gripper should be cut so that the gripper gap follows the shape of skirting boards, architraves and other obstacles and there should be at least two fixings in each piece with a fixing within the last 25mm of each piece. Long, medium and short pin gripper is available and the correct pin length for the carpet should be used.
4. Architectural (extra wide) gripper is available for larger areas and for use with carpets such as synthetic Wilton carpets which can be prone to shrinkage, although some installers simply fix two rows of gripper, known as "double-banking" to increase the holding power of the gripper.
5. On stairs, the gripper should be the full width of the stairs and placed twice the thickness of the carpet away from the tread and riser where the tread and riser meet if the carpet is being fitted as a continuous



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run. If there is to be a join in the carpet at the crotch of a stair, the gripper gully should be 1.5 times the carpet thickness (e.g., at the top step of a staircase where the stair carpet meets the landing carpet).

6. Gripper can be fixed using nails (pre-nailed gripper with ring shank or concrete nails is available), it can be screwed or fitted using PU or hot melt adhesive. When gluing, gripper should be cut into lengths of 150mm or less. Some modern staircases have thin riser panels and nails must not be used to fix the gripper as this can damage them.
7. Doorbars should be fitted in doorways where two pieces of carpet meet unless the job has been planned with joins in the doorways or with the carpet flowing from one room to another without a join. Where underlay is to be used, doorbars can be of the raised base type, or fitted over a plywood strip, to improve the appearance of the carpet at the doorbar.
8. Underlay should be fitted at 90° to the floorboards or at 90° to the length of the carpet over a solid floor. Each piece of underlay should run the opposite way to the previous one to prevent a step between the pieces if there is any thickness variation across the width of the underlay. All joins in the underlay should be taped using a suitable single-sided tape. On a timber subfloor the underlay should be fixed using a minimum amount of staples around the perimeter and not in front of doorways or in other walkway areas.
9. On stairs, underlay should be fitted from gripper to gripper to prevent heel and toe damage on the risers. Staples should not be used across the front of the treads. Waffle type underlays may need to be fitted sideways to provide the best support for the carpet over the nosing of the step.
10. The carpet should be laid out across the area, aligned with the room (checking this alignment with the client if necessary) and trimmed slightly oversize so that about 30mm stands up along each wall. The edges should then be creased and then stretched on to the gripper. Starting from the furthest point away from the door, or from an obstacle such as a fireplace the carpet should be hooked onto the gripper and stretched along the length first, then the width, working away from the starting point. On rooms of 5m or more in length or width, a power-stretcher should be used. **Felt-backed carpets should not be stretched; please refer to page 143.**
11. Once the carpet has been hooked onto the gripper and is under tension all round and a final check of the alignment has been done, it can be trimmed and tucked in using either a straight or concave blade. Both types of blade are suitable for trimming from the back, but to avoid damage to skirting boards only a straight blade should be used when trimming from the face of the carpet. Specialist trimming and/or tucking tools are available.
12. A bolster or stair tool is very likely to cause damage to the skirting boards and leading edge of the gripper and should not be used.
13. The carpet should be stretched up to both sides of a doorbar during the tensioning of the carpet, before trimming into the doorbar. Stretching the carpet in a doorway may result in the carpet shrinking away and fraying. Most doorbars can be dressed down with a rubber mallet or wood block and hammer to hold the edge of the carpet more securely.
14. The carpet should be stretch-fitted on stairs as well as flat areas. This can be achieved by working from the bottom of the stairs upwards, using a stretching tool (knee kicker) to achieve the right amount of tension. The pile should run down each step at right angles to the nosing, so separate pieces will be required for shaped steps such as kites or winders. Fitting from the top downwards and using a bolster or stair tool to create tension can cause damage to the carpet between the grippers.
15. Seaming can be carried out using a heat seaming iron and suitable heat seaming tape. The edges of the pieces of carpet



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that are to be joined should be trimmed accurately between the tufts and the cut edges should be sealed using an appropriate seam sealer to prevent fraying.

16. The carpet pieces should have the pile running in the same direction at the seam and should be tensioned during the seaming. The seaming iron should be used in the direction of the pile to minimise the risk of resetting the pile and leaving a dark stripe along the seam.
17. If seaming over underlay, a piece of thin plywood or other barrier should be used under the seaming iron to prevent weakening or melting the underlay. The seaming iron should be set at the right temperature for the seaming tape being used, and this tape should be suitable for the type of carpet being seamed.
18. A spiked roller should not be used on the seam while it is still warm as the carpet pile can be damaged. A seam weight can be used to ensure the carpet is bedded into the melted adhesive.

DIRECT-STICK INSTALLATION

1. The floorcovering is fitted without an underlay and glued directly to the subfloor.
2. The floorcovering should be laid out and aligned correctly. Awls or stay tacks can be used to hold the floorcovering in position while half of it is be pulled back to expose half of the subfloor.
3. The floorcovering adhesive should then be applied to the subfloor and left for the correct time as recommended by the manufacturer.
4. Then the floorcovering should be laid into the adhesive and pressure should be applied with a glider to ensure a good bond. The edges of the floorcovering should be creased around the perimeter of the room, with relief cuts if necessary, but the floorcovering should be left as long as possible before trimming to allow the adhesive to form a good bond.

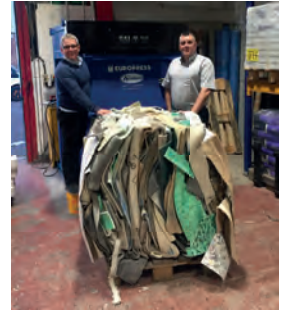
5. It is good practice to apply seam sealer to the cut edges when trimming to avoid fraying or catching on a vacuum cleaner.
6. If a join is required in the floorcovering, the edges to be joined must have seam sealer/cement applied to prevent fraying along the seam before the two pieces are bonded side by side to the subfloor.

DOUBLE-STICK INSTALLATION

This method of installation is used where high levels of footfall are expected, a wheelchair or other mobility aids will be in use, or the area is too large for stretch-fitting of the floorcovering. It is also useful in areas, such as home offices, and for some natural and flatwoven floorcoverings. The underlay is glued to the subfloor using a tackifier and then the floorcovering is bonded to the underlay using a carpet adhesive.

1. The underlay should be one that is suitable for double-stick installations. This may be made from crumb rubber, PU foam or other suitable material. Some underlay is designed to be used a particular way up for double-stick work and the manufacturer's instructions should be followed.
2. The tackifier adhesive should be applied to the subfloor using the appropriate notched trowel or roller as recommended by the adhesive manufacturer. If using a roller, this should be pre-wetted with the adhesive and care should be taken not to over spread the adhesive so that the correct thickness of adhesive is applied.
3. The adhesive should be allowed to dry as laying the underlay too soon can result in a permanent bond and this will cause problems when the underlay is uplifted. Some underlays have tackifier pre-applied and this will reduce the installation times.
4. Once the tackifier is dry, the underlay should be laid. It is recommended that the underlay runs at 90° to the length of the floorcovering so that it does not coincide with any seams that may be necessary.

RECYCLE ALL YOUR CARPET AND UNDERLAY WASTE USING A KENBURN CARPET CRUSHER



Over the past eight years, the 'Kenburn Carpet Crusher' has helped the flooring industry divert thousands of tonnes of recyclable carpet and underlay waste from landfill.

Over the same period, landfill tax has increased by 25% and will continue to rise every year for the foreseeable future which inevitably means skip cost annual increases are here to stay.

With improvements in technology, especially in the case of polypropylene carpets, it costs less to recycle new and uplifted carpet and underlay waste than it does to send it to landfill.

The 'Kenburn Carpet Crusher' recycling initiative covers the whole of England, Scotland and Wales and our advisors can visit your site and conduct a brief waste survey to explain how the scheme works and how the materials are collected and recycled.

If you think reducing your ever-increasing waste disposal costs and diverting your recyclable carpet and underlay waste from landfill would be beneficial to your company's environmental policy, please contact the Kenburn sales team on **01727 844988** to arrange a free of charge waste survey.



5. A glider should then be used to apply pressure and ensure the underlay is flat and has a good bond to the subfloor.
6. For a neat edge finish, the use of blind gripper is recommended. This is gripper that does not have any pins to hold the floorcovering but allows the edge to be tucked down and held securely in the gripper gully, reducing the risk of catching the edge when vacuuming. When using blind gripper, this should be fitted first.
7. The gripper gap should be approximately two thirds of the thickness of the floorcovering so that the edge of the floorcovering is pinched and held securely after tucking in. As the gripper is not holding any tension/stretch in the floorcovering, the number of fixings to the subfloor is not as critical as it is for stretch-fitting.
8. All joins in the underlay should be taped using a suitable quality single-sided tape. It is good practice to also apply this tape where the underlay meets the gripper to prevent any carpet adhesive falling into the gap and causing problems when the floorcovering is uplifted.
9. The floorcovering should be laid out and aligned correctly. Awls or stay tacks can be used to hold the floorcovering in position and the floorcovering should be pulled back to expose half of the underlay. The floorcovering adhesive should then be applied to the surface of the underlay and the blind gripper (if used).
10. The adhesive should be left for the correct time as recommended by the manufacturer. The floorcovering should be laid into the adhesive and pressure should be applied with a glider to ensure a good bond.
11. The edges of the floorcovering should be creased around the perimeter of the room, with relief cuts if necessary, but the floorcovering should be left as long as possible before trimming and tucking, to allow the adhesive to form a good bond.
12. If blind gripper has not been used, the floorcovering should be cut nett. It is good practice to apply seam sealer to the cut edges when trimming net to avoid fraying or catching on a vacuum cleaner.
13. If a join is required in the floorcovering, the edges to be joined must have seam sealer or cement applied which will prevent any fraying along the seam.

NATURAL FLOORCOVERINGS

Natural floorcoverings may be directly stuck to the subfloor or fitted using the double-stick method. However, most natural floorcoverings are flat-woven and so will quickly fray when cut unless the cut edges are sealed.

The back of the carpet can be coated with latex/seam sealer before the cut is made and the cut edge should always be sealed immediately with seam sealer before any fraying takes place. This takes considerably longer than simply cutting-in a carpet and the key to a good natural floorcovering installation is patience!

Seams in natural floorcoverings should also be sealed before the join is made. Very chunky loop-pile products may need the seam edges to be cut "Sawtooth" style, to give the best finished appearance. Further information about this can be obtained on FITA training courses.





ABOVE: Direct-to-subfloor installation using mushroom tape. Use a hand roller to press the tape onto the subfloor.



ABOVE: Using a Trim Master reduces installation time and produces a neat cut without marking the skirting.

FELT-BACKED CARPETS

Felt-backed carpets can be fitted directly to the subfloor or over an underlay using gripper.

When fixing directly to the subfloor, felt-backed carpets can be secured around their perimeter using mushroom tape, a good quality spray adhesive, or carpet adhesive. It is important to ensure the carpet is acclimatised first and that it is simply spread flat and not stretched, otherwise shrinkage can occur.

For areas of less than 20sqm, felt-backed carpets can be loose laid. Acclimatisation is of paramount importance if this is being done.

When fitting over underlay, microplast gripper is available which has mushroom tape on the surface instead of pins, or a combination of tape and pins.

The gripper should be positioned two-thirds of the pile-height of the carpet away from the wall. The carpet should be smoothed out and lightly tensioned, but not stretched. On stairs, the combined tape and pin gripper should always be used.

When seaming felt-backed carpet, the edges should be sealed with seaming cement that provides contact adhesion when the dry edges are brought together behind the seaming iron. Only use low temperature seaming tape and the iron should be set to a low temperature, in order to prevent damage to the felt backing.

INSTALLING CARPET TILES

Carpet tiles should be acclimatised on site for a minimum of 24-48 hours prior to fitting. They should be stored flat in their boxes or as recommended by the manufacturer.

In smaller areas, it is usually possible to loose lay carpet tiles, making sure that they are fitted tight to the walls and any obstructions, so that they don't gap or move.

In larger areas, it's recommended to install carpet tiles on a grid system of double-sided tape or to fully adhere them using suitable adhesive (usually a tackifier) to hold the tiles flat but also allows for lifting of the tiles when required. The tile manufacturer's installation instructions may specify how their tiles should be laid and these recommendations must be followed.

Before installation begins, check the quantities, colour and batch numbers; these should correspond as tiles from different batches may not colour match.

There are several ways to lay carpet tiles which can create different appearances:

- **BROADLOOM:** Each tile is laid with the pile running in the same direction to create the effect of a continuous piece of carpet. Most carpet tiles are marked on the back to show the direction of the pile.
- **CHECKERBOARD:** The tiles are laid with the pile direction alternating through 90° to create a checkerboard look.



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- **RANDOM:** Patterned tiles are laid randomly to avoid a uniform appearance.
- **BROKEN OR BRICK BOND:** Each row of tiles is aligned so that the joints are halfway between the joints of the previous row to create a brickwork-like appearance.
- **45° ANGLE:** The tiles are laid at 45° to the room creating a diamond pattern. This layout usually results in slightly more wastage than for straight lay.

Some tiles are intended to be laid only in specific ways, so the manufacturer's instructions should always be consulted. For example, thin loop-pile tiles may only be suitable for laying in a checkerboard design as when laid broadloom, the edges may not match.

MARKING OUT

1. Before beginning any marking out, check the proposed layout and alignment of the flooring with the end user.
2. All marking out begins from centre lines. These are the datum lines which should always be the point of reference throughout the installation. When dealing with an irregular shaped room, e.g., an L-shaped kitchen or hallway, consult the client and agree which is the main focal point area. This will be the area used to align the tiles. As no area is truly square, there are some measurements which must be taken.
3. First, check the width of the area at each end, followed by the length of the area on each side, and then measure the diagonals from corner to corner. This will indicate how square the area is, and will allow you to inform the client if, and where, the flooring will run out.
4. Measure the width at one end and halve this measurement to find the mid-point. Do this again at the opposite end of the area, and remember to always double check. Strike a line between the two mid-points to create a centre line.
5. Measure the length of this centre line and find the mid-point of this line. Effectively,

this is the centre point of the room. From this point, a second line can be drawn at right angles using a laser line, measuring 3-4-5 triangles or using a square.

6. The lines must be at right angles to each other, so double-check before proceeding to lay out the rest of the guidelines.

MARKING OUT STRAIGHT LAY

1. Place a tile at the centre point with the two edges along the centre lines, and tape in place with some double-sided tape to create a fixed point to work off.
2. Lay tiles along the centre lines outwards to as close to the walls as possible. If the edge piece is less than half a tile, adjust the centre tile by half, in either length or width or both, depending on the edge cut and recheck.
3. Mark the alternative measurements on the subfloor making sure to use a pencil or permanent marker (but not ball-point pen). This is now the start line.
4. Re-lay the tiles from the new start point to double check. Once the layout is confirmed, lift the tiles. It is helpful to mark the floor in pencil at this point, to assist when applying adhesive.

MARKING OUT 45°

1. Using either a laser line with a 45°, square tile or a trammel, mark out the 45° points and strike a line between them creating a cross on the subfloor. The line must pass through the centre point.
2. Position a tile over the centre point and align the corners with the 45° lines. If the markings are correct, then all four points will correspond with the centre lines. Now fix the tile down.
3. Loose lay further tiles towards the edges of the room to work out the size of the edge pieces. If these are less than half a tile, adjust the centre tile so that the edge tiles are bigger. Tiles to be fitted at a 45° angle can also be adjusted to adjust the size of the edge tiles.

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ABOVE: Fitting the tile using the back-cutting method



ABOVE: Take care with bitumen-backed tiles not to mark the skirting.

LAYING THE CARPET TILES

Once the tiles have been set out and adjusted if necessary, they can be installed. For small areas the tiles can be loose laid.

1. For larger areas double side tape or a tackifier adhesive can be used. When using double-sided tape, make sure it is of the recommended type for the carpet tiles. If the tiles have a plasticised backing, the wrong tape can react with the plasticisers causing it to lose strength, emulsify and possibly mark the surface.
2. Lay the tape in a grid pattern so that the number of rows and columns stated in the product installation instructions will be stuck down.
3. Remove the paper from the top of the double-sided tape as you install the tiles and make certain the tiles are firmly pressed onto the tape.
4. When using a tackifier, apply this along the centre or start lines and outwards over an area that can be comfortably covered, while still allowing space in the room to move around.
5. Once the tackifier has cured, work from the start point outwards. Firstly, place a row up the length.
6. Once these are in position, place the next row across the width forming a cross shape. Then install the field tiles and finish off by cutting-in the edge tiles.
7. Cutting carpet tiles can be carried out by using a guillotine, concave blade or straight blade. When installing up to a fixed object or wall which is straight, place a tile over the existing tile nearest the wall making sure that the outside edge is lined up with the tile underneath.
8. Next, place a tile up to the wall on top of the first tile and score along the edge, marking the tile below. This is the cut line. Run the blade through a couple of times taking care not to cut right through.
9. Bend the tile back and pass the blade through from the reverse. Place the tile into position making sure it fits neatly, being careful to avoid marking the skirting board, especially with bitumen-backed products.
10. For awkward cuts around curves or architraves, a bar scribe with a cutting blade can be used, or alternatively a template can be made.
11. First, cut a piece of template paper the exact size of the tile and place into position. Crease the paper around the object then trim using a straight blade.
12. Next, double-check to make sure it is a snug fit. Place the paper upside down on the reverse side of tile and trace around the paper using a pencil.
13. If the pencil mark is hard to see, first place some masking tape where the lines will be. Once transferred, cut along the line and place the tile in position.
14. Once the installation has been completed, vacuum the area and dispose of any off-cuts and other waste. ■



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GENERAL

Gripper is made from strips of high-grade resin-bonded 5-ply (6mm thick) plywood, measuring 1 inch wide x 5 feet in length, and is machined on one edge to a 60° angle. It usually has two rows of pins inserted upwards at a 60° angle to hold the floorcovering. Pins are spaced approximately three-quarters of an inch apart in a “W” formation at a 60° angle, to eliminate pull-out and bending, even when power-stretching.

Gripper is usually available pre-nailed with concrete, wood or dual-purpose nails, to speed up the fitting process. Wider grippers are available for use where higher holding power is needed.

TYPES OF GRIPPER

BLIND

Without pins and with either type of nails for fixing into wooden or concrete subfloors. More often than not, it has the dual-purpose nails in it. It is used in double-stick installations, purely to provide a gully for the carpet to tuck into.

SHORT PIN

The pins are set lower for use with short pile, thinner backed carpets. Available with ring shank fixings for timber substrates and concrete nails for solid floors.

MEDIUM PIN

The most common gripper used, as it works with most types of carpets on the market today (although short pin and long pin gripper is better for thinner or thicker backings than normal). Available with ring shank fixings for timber substrates, and concrete nails for solid floors.

LONG PIN

For carpets with a high pile or a thick backing. Available with ring shank fixings for timber substrates and concrete nails for solid floors.



ABOVE: Floorwise Diamond Gripper features extra-width and an increased number of zinc-coated pins for an easier fit and more secure hold. www.floorwise.co.uk

MICROPLAST GRIPPER

Designed for use with felt back carpet. It has mushroom tape attached to the top to stick to the backing, and it can be purchased with or without pins to hold the primary backing of the carpet. It is usually manufactured with dual purpose nails in it. Microplast gripper is also widely used for installing flatwoven carpets.

ARCHITECTURAL GRIPPER

This gripper is wider than standard gripper and has an extra row of pins. It is intended for use in large areas where a power-stretcher is needed, or where a carpet may be prone to shrinkage. This gripper normally has no factory fixings in it and should be both glued and nailed for a strong bond.

INSTALLING GRIPPER

The correct gripper correctly fitted and secured is essential to ensure a good quality carpet installation. Poorly fitted gripper will prevent a crisp finished appearance and could lead to slackening and creasing of the carpet.

There are different methods for fixing gripper which will be determined by the subfloor type,



ABOVE: LT50-LAC pneumatic masonry nailer for fixing gripper/skirting to concrete/block. www.spotnails.co.uk

including ring shank or masonry nails, drilling and plugging, hot melt or PU adhesive.

Stapling alone is not usually adequate to secure gripper, but it can be useful to add additional fixings where needed, and for small pieces (for example, when fitting around an architrave).

1. When gluing gripper, it should be cut into pieces no more than 150mm long and glued along the length of each piece. When nailing, each piece should have at least two fixings, with a fixing within 25mm of each end of each piece.
2. A gap of two thirds of the thickness of the carpet should be left between the skirting and the gripper.
3. On a stair, the gap is usually twice the thickness of the carpet on a run or 1.5 times the thickness, where two pieces join at the stair crotch.

ACCESSORIES

Doorbars, edge trims and other accessories can make a big difference to the appearance and function of textile floorcoverings. They should be carefully chosen to complement the floorcovering and the installer should ensure that the profiles are suitable for the application.

Profiles, edgings, trims, etc., are designed to protect the edge of floorcoverings, laminate or wood floors where they end, or meet other

materials. It is important to choose profiles with the correct shape and depth to suit the materials being installed and the area where they are to be used: one size does not fit all.

The NICF recommends the use of raised base bars when carpet is fitted with an underlay. A flat based bar can easily be adapted to a raised base, by inserting a strip of plywood or blind gripper under it. A variety of shims of different thicknesses can also be used.

MATERIALS USED FOR FITTINGS

The most common materials for the manufacture of door bars and other trims are aluminium, brass, stainless steel, UPVC and timber. More exclusive materials are also available from specialist suppliers.

FINISHES

Bronze, brass, aluminium, brushed aluminium, simulated brass, etched bronze, gold or silver, foil-covered aluminium, wood and wood effects are all available. Trims are also available with profiles which allow some floorcovering to be inserted to create a fully matched look. All fittings, whether in the base materials or in simulated effects, must be able to withstand cleaning and maintenance regimes that will be performed on the flooring and floorcovering they adjoin.

CLIP-DOWN

Made in two or more parts that clip together. The base is fixed to the subfloor and the top/cover is clipped in place when the floorcoverings have been fitted. Clip-down systems that will bend through curves are also available.

COMBINATION PROFILE

Designed to combine four applications in one to reduce stock and display space. Made in HDF or aluminium to be used as a transition, border or wood-to-carpet trim.

COVER STRIPS

These are used to conceal and protect joins and expansion gaps.

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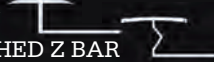
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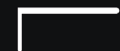
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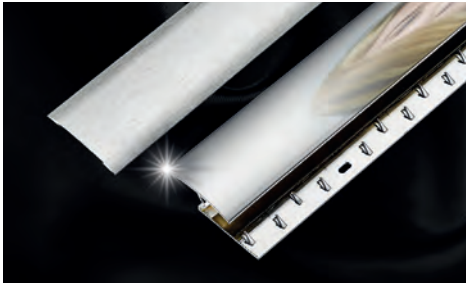
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ABOVE: With new true chrome plate and brushed steel nickel, the Floorwise Reflections range brings better durability and a higher quality finish that looks even more impressive when complementing existing fittings. Visit www.floorwise.co.uk

COVER STRIPS FOR CARPET

Flat with drilled countersunk holes to cover adjacent carpet edges. One style has angled ribs on the underside to lock into the carpet and draw the two edges together, when the strip is screwed to the floor. Must not be used with a floating floor, as they grip the flooring and prevent any lateral movement.

COVER STRIPS FOR VINYL

In varying widths with top shaped to take into account the thickness of the vinyl.

EDGINGS, BEVELLED

Right-angled solid wood with a rounded or chamfered edge.

EDGINGS, CAPPING

Used as a finish to open plan areas where a floor butts up to other floorcoverings or as an edging to matwells, access panels and ceramic floors. Top is narrower than the base, both being at 90° to the upright. No screws or fixings.

EDGINGS, RAMPED

Has a top at a shallow angle to the base to allow for easy transition for wheeled objects. Drilled and countersunk with screws, or an inverted L-shape with the end of the top sloping downwards. Also, as solid wood transitional profile to protect the edges of the wood floor, whilst ramping down to sit on, or butt up to the floorcovering below. There is a rebated model to sit on the floorcoverings.

EDGINGS, ROUND

Transition from laminate to resilient, or carpet at a lower level. Top is slightly curved with one side higher than the other to allow for the different thicknesses of the materials.

EDGINGS

Single edging flat plate with integral fixing holes and cover, with pins angled towards the inside edge to secure the carpet on one side. Different depths are available for thick/thin carpet. Similar double edging with pins angled towards the centre to secure the carpet on both sides.

Where there is an underlay, this is butted up to the lips of the edging with the carpet cut to slot into the edging and be secured. For low traffic areas, where a carpet held by gripper finishes on an open landing, a shaped edging can be used that rolls down on to the flat surface.

EDGINGS FOR MATWELLS

Shaped with a ridged surface for non-slip.

JOINT COVERS

Enable profiles to be laid securely where drilling is not possible, such as with laminates, parquet or cork. One profile adapts from 7-23mm. Movement joint profiles should be installed flush to a finished tile surface or 1mm below to ensure the point load is correctly dispersed.

LIGHTED

Trims and nosings that incorporate LEDs.

PIPE COLLARS

Two semi-circular pieces made from hardwood or plastic to be joined round radiator or pipes to cover expansions gap on a floating floors.



ABOVE: Premier Bendy Bull trims for straight and curved bullnose/curtail steps. Can be bent and cut to length on site easily and quickly and are available in a wide range of finishes and lengths. Visit www.stairrods.co.uk

QUADRANT

Solid right-angled moulding to cover expansion joints around the periphery of the room, or gaps around fireplaces, column plinths, etc. Can also be made from moulded plastic.

DECORATIVE SKIRTINGS

In a variety of solid wood timber species, can be pre-finished or untreated for coating/painting on site. Available also in wood-effect, made using similar technology to laminate flooring (printed surface laid or wrapped around a substrate) or in UPVC. May be designed to carry pipes or cables.

Manufacturers make finishes to match solid wood or laminate wood-effects on offer by flooring manufacturers, so contractors and retailers can offer clients a total package. Matching internal/external corners also usually available. Use end caps for the end of a run of skirting, especially necessary for laminates to ensure the substrate is not visible. Also in gold/silver/bronze effects. Sit-on skirtings with shaped bottoms are fitted after the flooring has been laid. Flat skirtings are used with carpets or tiles. Both types attach to the wall with contact adhesive.

STAIR NOSINGS

For use on wood or concrete steps, parquet or laminate with inserts for anti-slip. They have reversed L-shaped sections or rounded noses in aluminium foil or rubber.

STAIR NOSINGS, ARCHITECTURAL

Extruded aluminium base with abrasive filler that extends over the radius of the nose.

STAIR NOSINGS, EXTERNAL

In heavy duty aluminium with deeply ridged top. Used for repairing the edges of old and blunted wood stairs, stone and concrete.

STAIR PROFILES

For standard or overhanging stairs, with non-skid or adhesive fleece pads.

STAIR RODS

Solid or hollow metal, some hexagonal, and solid wood, some with flat fronts, cut to size or in lengths for cutting in-situ. Dual purpose rods which can be fixed with or without gripper. Clips and eyes are available in matching finishes.

T-PROFILES

As profiles, but with vertical bar underneath the top of the profile which pushes down between the two floorcoverings.

Z-SECTION

Transition profile shaped to enable wood or laminate to be joined with carpet. Integral cover which should be lightly pressed down with a rubber mallet after fitting for a snug fit. ■



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CARPET FITTING

1. Tack hammer
2. Claw hammer
3. Rubber mallet
4. Staple hammer
5. Tin snips
6. Gripper shears
7. Carpet shears
8. Knives (≥ 2)
9. Hacksaw
10. Tape measure
11. Laser measure
12. Knee kicker
13. Electric stapler
14. Hot melt adhesive gun
15. Needle and thread
16. Bradawls (≥ 2)
17. Staple lifter
18. Base mould lifter
19. Tucking tool (lino knife)
20. Stair tool
21. Heat seam iron
22. Loop-pile cutter
23. Row finder (≥ 2)
24. Seam lock (≥ 2)
25. Carpet trimmer (optional)
26. Speed catt (optional)
27. Power-stretcher
28. Seam weight
29. Staple gun
30. Straight edge(s)



LEFT: Spotnails Maestri ME4000 Electronic Stapler for 16mm and 20mm divergent staples. For fixing gripper and ideal for cap and band bull noses and open tread stairs, flooring and upholstery. Visit spotnailsitd.co.uk

Having the right tools is the most important aspect for a flooring fitter to make the job easier and more efficient. Many power tools are made in two colours by manufacturers to distinguish between professional and domestic ranges which may, for example, contain different quality motors. As a general rule, try and buy the best you can afford – you will find they will stand the test of time and be worth the extra outlay.

BELOW: Knee kickers and tuckers from RWS Carpet Fitters Supplies. Visit www.carpetfittersshoponline.com





LEFT: For small to medium size areas, the WOLFF Duro Stripper provides effective floor covering removal. Visit www.wolff-tools.co.uk

DOMESTIC SHEET VINYL FITTING

1. Moisture meter
2. Pencils
3. Various trimming knives + spare blades
4. Tape measure
5. Laser measure
6. Rule
7. Straight edge
8. Chalk line and chalk
9. Floorline laser
10. Bar or long scribe
11. Dividers or short scribe
12. Recess scribe
13. Adhesive trowels
14. Hand roller
15. 68kg articulated roller
16. Long handled broom
17. Hand brush + dustpan
18. Screed equipment

LAMINATE FITTING

1. Moisture meter
2. 2m straight edge
3. Stanley knife
4. Tape measure
5. Laser measure
6. Pencils
7. String/laser line
8. Vacuum + accessories
9. Screed equipment
10. Work bench/trestles
11. Laminate saw
12. Hand saw
13. Coping saw
14. Hammer
15. Nail bar
16. Spacers/wedges
17. Drill and hole saw
18. Punch
19. Pincers
20. Electric or air pinner
21. Rubbish bags
22. Masking tape
23. Tool bag/box

LVT FITTING

1. Moisture meter
2. Pencils
3. Various trimming knives + spare blades
4. Tape measure
5. Laser measure
6. Rule
7. 2m + 4m straight edge
8. Chalk line + chalk
9. Floorline laser
10. Bar or long scribe
11. Large set square
12. Dividers or short scribe
13. Recess scribe
14. Adhesive trowels
15. Recess scribe
16. Adhesive trowels
17. Hand roller
18. 68kg articulated roller
19. Long handled broom
20. Hand brush and dustpan
21. Guillotine
22. Beveller
23. Screed equipment
24. Electric drill (slow speed)
25. Rotary paddle



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LEFT: The WOLFF Turbo Stripper provides powerful removal for all types of flooring even when the covering is well bonded. Visit www.wolff-tools.co.uk

WOOD FITTING

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Moisture meters | 13. Coping saw | 25. Cleaning rags |
| 2. 2m straight edge | 14. Hammer | 26. Screed equipment |
| 3. Stanley knife | 15. Nail bar | 27. Nylon spacers for washer joints |
| 4. Tape measure | 16. Spacers/wedges | 28. Laser line |
| 5. Laser measure | 17. Drill and hole saw | 29. Floorline laser |
| 6. Pencils | 18. Chop saw | 30. Knocking block |
| 7. String line | 19. Rail saw | 31. Punch |
| 8. Vacuum + accessories | 20. Jigsaw | 32. Pincers |
| 9. Screed equipment | 21. Flooring nailers | 33. Electric or air pinner |
| 10. Work bench or trestles | 22. Oscillating saw | 34. Rubbish bags |
| 11. Laminate saw | 23. Flooring mallet | 35. Masking tape |
| 12. Hand saw | 24. Adhesive trowels | 36. Tool bag or box |

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GENERAL

Underlays are available for most flooring types to improve underfoot comfort, reduce noise in the room and/or noise transfer to adjacent rooms, increase warmth and prevent small “nibs” such as grit affecting the flooring. Underlay will not flatten out an uneven floor, and should not be used as a packer to try and level the surface of laminate or wood flooring.

WOOD FLOORING

Most wood flooring, both solid and engineered, will be directly bonded to a subfloor without the need for underlay. However, if fitted as a floating floor, polystyrene foam or fibre board underlays are available and can be used with or without a separate DPM.

There are also self-adhesive underlays which have adhesive on the top side only, so the flooring is bonded to the underlay but is still able to “float”, i.e., to expand and contract freely as a whole unit. If suitable, the manufacturer's installation instructions should be followed.

LAMINATE FLOORING

An underlay should always be used under laminate flooring. Commonly made from expanded polystyrene foam or fibreboard, they may be used with a separate DPM or have a membrane built-in to the underlay, usually in the form of a gold or silver coloured foil. Damp-proofing is only complete when these underlays are joined using a vapour barrier tape or the joining tape included as part of the underlay.

Old carpet should never be used as an underlay beneath laminate (or wood) flooring. It is not able to support the joints and will lead to the joints breaking open.

When used over UFH systems, special underlay which allows the heat to pass through more easily is recommended. This improves the efficiency of the heating system and lowers the running costs.

CARPETS AND TEXTILE FLOORING

STRETCH FIT

A wide choice of underlays is available for stretch fit installations. The right underlay will improve underfoot comfort, reduce noise and improve thermal insulation, as well as preventing premature wear. The price of underlays varies so the right balance between price and performance will need to be considered.

Underlay that has already been in use will offer less resilience and support in the most used areas of the installation. This will cause these areas to flatten and show wear (trafficking) much more quickly under a new carpet, so it is not good practice to reuse a customer's existing underlay.

Some of the many types of underlay that are available include:

- **FELT:** One of the first types of underlay to be used. Made from recycled or waste yarn. Available in different weights and thicknesses.
- **CRUMB RUBBER:** Made from recycled tyres with a scrim on one surface. Dimensionally stable, suitable for high traffic areas including stairs, but firm when compared to some other types of underlay. Available in various thicknesses. Prone to crumbling when cut if sharp blade or shears are not used.

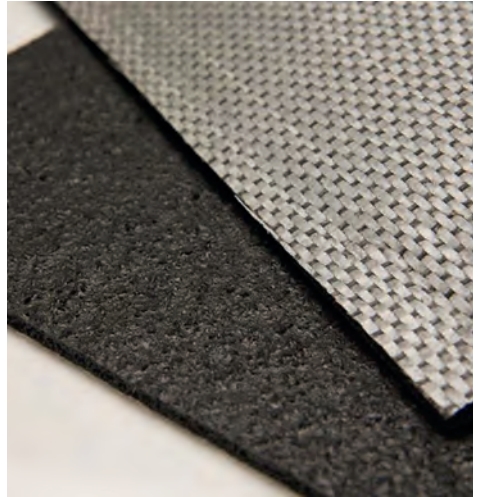
- **SPONGE RUBBER:** Made using chemical agents to produce an open-cell foam structure and produced in flat or waffle sheets in different thicknesses.
- **POLYURETHANE (PU) FOAM:** Made from recycled PU foam chips chemically bonded together in a mould and sliced into sheets to required thickness. Available in various densities/thicknesses, usually with netting

or film on one surface to improve handling strength and to allow the floorcovering to slide more easily during fitting. May have small hard lumps in it due to the hard skins and glue lines of some of the foam waste products used in its manufacture.

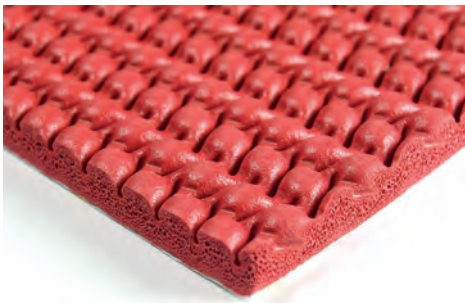
- **COMBINATION:** Usually made from rubber crumb and felt to give the advantages of both types of underlay.



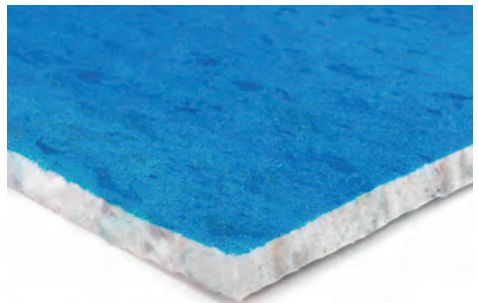
ABOVE: Traditional style felt underlays made from recycled materials. With excellent “bedding in” properties they are ideally suited to woven backed carpets. Visit www.floorwise.co.uk



ABOVE: Crumb rubber, still regarded as being the most supportive underlay for areas with heavy footfall in both domestic and commercial installations. Visit www.floorwise.co.uk



ABOVE: Sponge rubber by Tredaire. Colours Red is Interfloor’s top sponge rubber underlay, giving unrivalled heat and sound insulation. Its excellent shock absorbing properties also help carpets look newer for longer. Visit interfloor.com



ABOVE: PU foam underlay is manufactured from recycled foam material and is particularly good at insulation and impact sound reduction as well as being inherently comfortable and durable, with lots of thickness options and densities. Visit interfloor.com

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Underlay should be fitted at 90° to the floorboards or at 90° to the length of the carpet over a solid floor. Each piece of underlay should run the opposite way to the previous one to prevent a step between the pieces if there is any thickness variation across the width of the underlay. All joins in the underlay should be taped using a suitable single-sided tape.

On a timber subfloor the underlay should be fixed using a minimum number of staples around the perimeter and not in front of doorways or in other walkway areas.

On stairs, underlay should be fitted from gripper to gripper to prevent heel and toe damage on the risers. Staples should not be used across the front of the treads. Waffle type underlays may need to be fitted sideways to provide the best support for the carpet over the nosing of the step.

DOUBLE STICK

The underlay should be one that is suitable for double-stick installations. This may be made from crumb rubber, PU foam or some other suitable material. Some underlay is designed to be used a particular way up for double-stick work and the manufacturer's instructions should be followed.

LVT

Click-together LVT systems may have an underlay available. This will be a thin layer of foam to ensure that the joints are fully supported and do not come apart.

Bonded vinyl tiles are usually stuck directly to the subfloor without underlay but acoustic underlays are available for properties where sound reduction is important, for example, blocks of flats (see below).

ACOUSTIC UNDERLAYS

Several acoustic underlay systems are available for use in locations where sound transmission from one part of the property to another needs to be minimised.

These underlays may be suitable for a variety of flooring products and the instructions for the underlay and the flooring product must be followed. If necessary the manufacturers will provide additional information to help specify and install the products correctly.

When using an acoustic underlay under carpets, consideration must be given to the fixing of gripper around the perimeter. Normal fixing methods are likely to compromise the acoustic effects of the underlay, so the underlay manufacturer will have guidelines for fixing around the perimeter. This is the same for double-stick installations where blind gripper will give a neater finish.

When using acoustic underlay underneath vinyl flooring, the possibility of plasticiser migration should be considered. Some of these products use recycled rubber which will discolour vinyl and emulsify the adhesives. ■

GENERAL

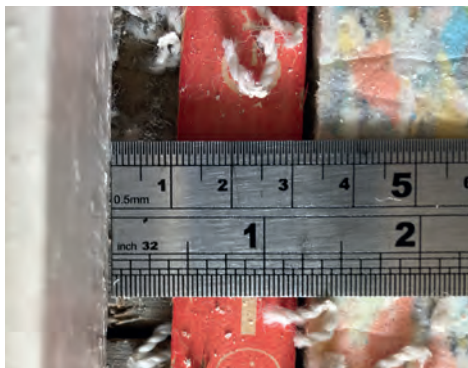
Installing domestic flooring of all kinds is a complex process which depends on the skills and expertise of the installer. The appearance and long-term performance of any flooring can be affected by poor installation. Complaints may arise at any stage in the installation process. When there is more than one person or company involved in the project (e.g., a retailer and a fitter), good communication between them is important to help resolve any issues and also to ensure that if mistakes have been made, these are learned from to avoid similar problems in the future.

Installers should comply with the product manufacturer's installation instructions for the flooring and all the materials used (e.g., adhesives, smoothing compounds), and with the relevant British Standards.

The key standards for domestic flooring are:

1. BS 8201:2011

Code of practice for installation of flooring of wood and wood-based panels



ABOVE: Failure to achieve the correct gripper gap for the type of carpet to be installed can often result in a poor finish and could lead to a complaint.

2. BS 8203:2017

Installation of resilient floor coverings
– Code of practice

3. BS 8204:2003

Screeds, bases and in-situ floorings
(seven parts)

4. BS 5325:202

Installation of textile floor coverings
– Code of practice

These Standards, and the manufacturer's instructions, set out requirements that need to be met, even before installation work begins.

Consumers are covered by *The Consumer Rights Act 2015*:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/15/contents/enacted

The Consumer Rights Act requires, amongst other things, that the flooring must be:

- Of satisfactory quality.
- Fit for purpose.
- Safe.
- Durable.
- Free from minor defects.

It also requires that the installer must carry out his work with reasonable skill and care, and that this goes beyond simply doing the work and includes alerting the consumer to any potential problems, which may not have been foreseen at an earlier stage.

In other words, the installer shouldn't just ignore any issues such as moisture, unevenness in the subfloor, or a product which is clearly not right for the location/use.



ABOVE: This sheet vinyl started to lift when the smoothing compound detached from the subfloor.

Citizen's Advice offer guidance on Consumer Rights www.citizensadvice.org.uk or seek assistance from a solicitor or legal advisor, as this is beyond the scope of this Guide.

NICF have suitably qualified inspectors who will undertake independent inspections to evaluate flooring problems, and further information can be obtained from their websites.

FLOORING INSPECTIONS

Potential visual defects should be inspected from a normal standing or sitting position and defects which would be visible in the normal use of the home should be considered as potential issues. Backlighting, unusual viewing angles and other means of exaggerating issues should not be used. The overall appearance of the flooring should be consistent, unless it is part of the product design/scheme.

In addition to this, defects which could result in failure of, or problems with, the flooring over its expected lifetime, are also valid complaints. Fitting issues may require more thorough investigation to ascertain whether or not the job has been done correctly. A written record with photos of the inspection should be kept, along with any other documents or correspondence relating to the complaint.

It should be noted that all documentation relating to any consumer, must be disclosed to the consumer on request under the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), and so any such

documentation should not include anything defamatory, prejudiced or offensive that might give rise to a different type of complaint if the consumer saw it.

PATTERN MATCHING / LAYOUT AND ALIGNMENT / POSITION OF JOINS, etc.

In general, complaints of this type should not arise if the estimating has been done correctly and the installer has checked the details with the customer before proceeding with the installation. However, there are some issues which are unavoidable:

- Lined and geometric patterns in any kind of flooring will run out of alignment in rooms which are not square or have curving walls.
- Striped carpets will run out of alignment around kites and winders.
- Most kinds of flooring have size limits and may require joins or expansion breaks when fitted over large areas.
- Pattern matching between sections of flooring usually requires additional materials.
- Carpet patterns, especially stripes, will appear to "wander" as the pile bends over during use.

RESILIENT SHEET FLOORING ISSUES

CUTTING-IN

Sheet flooring should be cut neatly around the perimeter, finishing directly against the skirting boards or other features, or with a consistent gap. Jagged cut edges or gaps where the edge does not follow the perimeter shape and which are visible from a normal standing or seated position are not acceptable.

SUBFLOOR IMPERFECTIONS SHOWING THROUGH

The subfloor should be smooth and free from grit and other debris before the flooring is laid. If a smoothing compound has been applied, this should be free from flow and trowel marks, but if

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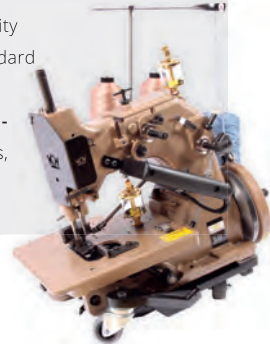
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not, then it has not been applied with reasonable skill and care. Imperfections will cause the flooring to wear prematurely and are not acceptable.

JOINS

Joins between sheets should be welded to prevent the retention of soiling and grit and the blackening of the joint line.

RUCKING / TEARING

Tearing caused by the installer during installation is unacceptable. Rucking or tearing caused by the dragging of items across the surface of the flooring by the consumer is not a fault.

BUBBLING / RIPPLING

Sheet vinyl flooring should remain fully bonded to the subfloor. If it starts to bubble or ripple, this indicates an adhesion problem which may be due to being spread unevenly or too thinly, the adhesive being left open for too long before the flooring is laid into it (late placement), the wrong kind of adhesive being used, or moisture in the subfloor causing the adhesive and/or the smoothing compound to fail.

DISCOLOURATION

Vinyl flooring (sheet and tile) can discolour due to the presence of moisture in the subfloor, laying over old flooring/adhesive or using the wrong adhesive (plasticiser migration), or if a plasticised rubber/vinyl mat is placed on the flooring. The cause of the discolouration should be determined and dealt with.



ABOVE: An issue with an LVT floor as a result of not allowing sufficient time to acclimatise the product or the adhesive not being applied right up to the edges.

LVT FLOORING ISSUES

ADHESIVE / SMOOTHING COMPOUND DE-BONDING

LVT flooring should remain fully bonded to the subfloor. If tiles start to bubble or ripple, then this indicates there is a problem with the adhesion. This may be due to the adhesive being spread unevenly or too thinly, the adhesive being left open for too long before the flooring is laid into it (late placement), the wrong kind of adhesive being used, or moisture in the subfloor causing the adhesive and/or the smoothing compound to fail.

GAPS BETWEEN TILES

It is virtually impossible to install resilient floor tiles without gaps between the tiles, but these should not detract from the overall appearance of the flooring when viewed from a normal standing or sitting position. No individual gap should be prominent. As an accepted industry standard, no gap in the body of the floor should be $\leq 0.3\text{mm}$, but this is not detailed in British/EU Standards and a small number of gaps greater than this are unlikely to affect the general performance of an LVT floor.

EDGE SEALING

Silicone sealant use is not a technical requirement and is therefore an option to be discussed with the customer, if required, and should not be used to mask poor workmanship. Should be applied neatly, with a consistent width of bead.

HEAT DISTORTION

Adhered tiles should be bonded with a high temperature adhesive in areas which will be subjected to bright sunlight and/or heat. Unbonded (click) systems may distort if the surface temperature reaches or exceeds 27°C and therefore may not be suitable for these locations. Solar gain (heat on a flooring surface from direct sunlight through windows, doors, etc.), can easily exceed 50°C on an average sunny day. The manufacturer's instructions should be referred to. Heat-dissipating underlays for click LVT flooring are available, to reduce the risk of rippling in high temperatures.



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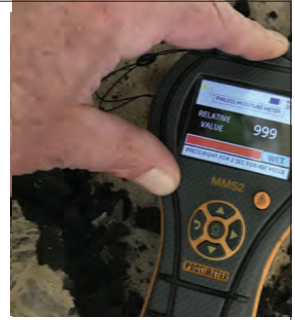
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JOINTS BREAKING

Click-together LVT flooring may open up at the joints and the joint profiles may break if fitted over an uneven subfloor, or if affected by heat distortion (see above).

WOOD FLOORING ISSUES

SHRINKING / SURFACE CRACKING

Wood shrinks when it loses moisture. Shrinking and surface cracking is an indication that the boards have dried out and may indicate that they were not acclimatised properly before they were laid. It may also indicate the flooring has been subjected to excessive localised heat, such as an over-hot (>27°C) UFH system.

CUPPING / WARPING

The natural result of changes in humidity of the wood; the expansion and shrinkage is greatest along the annual rings. Moisture changes can cause boards to cup or crown.

A small amount of cupping is to be expected and *BS 8201:2011* allows for cupping of 0.2% of the width of an engineered wood panel, and 0.3% of the width of a solid wood panel.

More extreme cupping, however, may be caused where there is excessive moisture or drying, or an imbalance in moisture levels between the surface and underside of the boards, perhaps through moisture in the subfloor or mopping of the surface. The cause of the moisture must be determined.

CREAKING / LIFTING (FLOATING FLOOR)

Wood expands when it gains moisture and should be installed so that this expansion can take place when necessary. Where the flooring is prevented from expanding, it tightens, causing it to creak underfoot, and may lift from the subfloor. This can happen as a result of just a couple of pinch points where expansion gaps have not been left.



ABOVE: Cut around the door frame. This laminate joint has taken all the pressure when expansion gaps were not left along a 14m run.



ABOVE: Moisture ingress along the joint lines of laminate flooring causes uneven swelling

GAPS BETWEEN BOARDS

It is normal to have gaps between boards and these gaps will vary with changes in atmospheric humidity. Gaps of up to 2mm along the side joints are acceptable, as long as they are parallel and even across the flooring, and the end joints may gap by up to 0.6mm. Uneven, inconsistent, or single gaps in an otherwise closely fitted floor, require investigation.

LAMINATE FLOORING ISSUES

SCRATCHES AND IMPACT DAMAGE

Laminate is resistant to impacts and scratches and hard-wearing, but still requires protection with felt pads under furniture and avoiding scrapes and impacts from sharp objects.

CHIPPING ALONG JOINT LINES / CORNERS

Chipping is an indication the joint lines are no longer flat. The raised side of the joint is vulnerable to damage from footwear and items moved across the surface. This may be the result of the subfloor being uneven, moisture ingress causing the joints to swell, or compression damage (see below). The cause of the raised joint edges must be determined and resolved.

COMPRESSION DAMAGE

If laminate is unable to expand freely because correct expansion gaps have not been left or the flooring is constricted in some places, the joints will be forced together, crushing them and causing them to “peak”. This will be visible as a lighter line along the joints when viewed in reflected light.

SWELLING ALONG JOINT LINES

May be the result of compression damage or moisture ingress. Compression damage tends to be even across the width of the joint, but moisture ingress tends to be uneven and often appears as “bubbles” of swelling. Moisture ingress is usually due to flooring subjected to spillages or wet cleaning (including floor wipes). Products are available to seal the joints against moisture at the time the flooring is installed.

CREAKING

Creaking is a sign that the flooring is tight and cannot expand freely. If not corrected, compression damage and/or lifting is likely to occur.

BOUNCINESS UNDERFOOT

May be the result of lifting due to the flooring being unable to expand, or that the subfloor is uneven and there are hollows directly underneath the flooring where it is not sitting flat on the subfloor. Laminate flooring is not a structural floor and the joints cannot withstand repeated flexing, so the subfloor must be flat to within the tolerance specified by the manufacturer.

COLOUR RUBBING OFF

Laminate flooring has a transparent surface covering a printed pattern and so the colour will not rub off. However, with a V-groove design, the surface of the V-groove is not made from the surface material, but is lacquered using a matching-coloured lacquer. The V-grooves are therefore, less resistant to moisture and cleaning products which can soften the lacquer and allow it to rub off during use and cleaning.



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Supplying and fitting the right product in the right way needs skill and care.

Manufacturers of floorcoverings, adhesives and other flooring materials are a great source of helpful information, and some provide services to help specifiers and installers at all stages of the process

If you need further help, or a fully independent assessment of a flooring installation, Richard Renouf of Expertise With Integrity Limited, is available to provide:

- Independent flooring inspections throughout the UK
- Help and advice by telephone and email
- Training



Richard has extensive experience in flooring and complaints resolution. He is the former adjudicator and founder of the Furniture and Home Improvement Ombudsman, a consultant trainer for FITA (The Flooring Industry Training Association), a regular columnist in Contract Flooring Journal and Interiors Monthly, and a Judge of the UK Floor Layer of the Year Competition.

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CARPETS AND OTHER TEXTILE FLOORING ISSUES

POLE / PRESSURE MARKS

When carpet is manufactured, all tufts of the pile are set at the same angle so the surface looks uniform and even. The carpet is rolled onto a tube for storage and transportation and during this time the weight of the roll can “bend” the pile that is towards the bottom of the roll, so that it shows darker bands when unrolled for fitting.

There may also be a distinct line where the edge of the end of the carpet has been overlapped as the carpet has been rolled up, and this is usually about 40-45cm in from the end of the carpet.

As the carpet gets used and vacuumed, the pile is able to resume its original position and these temporary marks will disappear, usually within 2-4 weeks depending on the use and maintenance the carpet receives.

SHADING / TRAFFICKING / PILE REVERSAL

When carpet is manufactured, all the tufts of the pile are set at the same angle so the surface looks uniform and even. During use, the pile is bent in different directions and may not always recover its original position.

- **SHADING:** A term used for temporary differences in the pile angle which create a patchy appearance which can be removed by brushing or vacuuming. Longer pile, velvet-finish carpets are especially likely to show this affect, and it is considered to be a characteristic feature of these carpets.
- **TRAFFICKING:** A term used to describe the shading effect caused by the use of the carpet. Irregular patches of light or dark shading in doorways, in front of seating and where foot traffic occurs is to be expected and is likely to remain after vacuuming, as the pile fibres set into a new angle because of use. Reusing an underlay under a new carpet is very likely to cause trafficking to occur at a much quicker rate than normal on the new carpet.



ABOVE: Carpet pile responds to foot traffic sometimes in ways which appear quite random, in this case, “shading”, which is a normal characteristic of cut-pile carpet.

- **PILE REVERSAL:** A term used to describe what appear to be random areas of light or dark patches which seem to bear no relation to the usage pattern of the carpet. These do not respond to brushing or vacuuming. Devices are available which claim to be able to prevent pile reversal and some manufacturers guarantee it won't happen. In general, it is a normal characteristic and is evident in many carpets, including commercial installations. A service is available to reset the pile and reduce the effects of pile reversal.

SHEDDING / PILLING / COBWEBBING

Carpet yarns, especially wool and other natural fibres, are made from short lengths of fibre twisted together. When the yarn is cut, there will be short lengths of fibre created by the cut which will fall out of the pile. On a new cut-pile carpet, these loose fibres will be shed during the first few weeks/months of use (depending on vacuuming effectiveness). An upright vacuum with brushes removes these loose fibres quicker than a cylinder vacuum on a cut-pile carpet.

The volume of fibres that collect in the vacuum will appear to be large because the fibres are fluffed up and not compacted, but they will be a small fraction of the carpet pile, and this shedding is natural and to be expected.

On loop-pile carpets, the loose fibres may break out from the pile but still be held in place which can create a fuzzy, cobweb-like appearance on the carpet surface. This is most likely when using an upright vacuum cleaner on a loop-pile carpet, and for these carpets, a suction-only setting is better.

SNAGS AND PULLS

Loose threads should be trimmed during installation and all edges and seams should be secure so that they do not get caught during use or vacuuming. Snags and pulls during use may dislodge tufts or cause runs in loop-pile carpets.

LOOSE / RUCKING

When carpet is fitted in the normal conditions of the room and at the correct tension, it should not require a restretch at any time. If the carpet comes loose, it is likely to be because the gripper is fitted too far from the skirting boards so the edge is not being held on the gripper pins. Fitting a carpet when it is very cold may also result in slackening when it warms up, but it still should not come off the gripper. Door bars should be dressed down to hold the edge of the carpet at a doorway and prevent it coming loose.

FRAYING

Fraying may occur during installation and can be avoided by the use of an anti-fray product or edge/seam sealer. Once the carpet is fitted, it should not fray and this will usually only occur if the gripper is not in the correct position, the door bars are not dressed down, or seams have not been sealed. These are all installation faults.

SHRINKING

When carpets come loose (see Loose/Rucking above), they may appear to shrink because the carpet reverts back to the size it was before being stretched into place. When a carpet is held securely onto gripper any "shrinking" of the carpet will simply increase the tension.

Felt-backed carpets should not be stretched, but simply smoothed flat and hooked onto the gripper or mushroom tape. The felt backing exerts a considerable force and the carpet will pull back to its original size if it has been stretched.

DELAMINATING

Tufted carpets have the pile stitched into a primary backing and then a secondary backing is glued on to hold the tufts in place. This secondary backing may delaminate during installation if the adhesive fails or after installation if the carpet is made wet.



ABOVE: Joins are often a cause for complaint. Ensure all edges to be seamed are prepared correctly and seaming takes place on a seam board.

However, once the carpet is fitted under tension, delamination should not occur or, if it does, should not cause any issues. If the carpet comes loose (see Loose/Rucking above), the carpet can delaminate where it is rippled and creased due to the flexing and strain on the adhesive layer, and this is an installation fault.

UPDRAUGHT SOILING

Many homes have suspended floors with air circulating under and around skirting boards. Gaps in floorboards and under skirtings can allow this air to blow through the carpet and this will deposit dust in the pile, showing as dark lines around the edge and/or in places where the draught penetrates.

Paper underfelt should be used under the underlay, and underlay joins should be taped to seal them from updraughts.

SEAMING ISSUES

Seams in carpets should be fit for purpose and should not snag or come apart, even when vacuuming. When seamed correctly, using the correct heat-seam tape and sealing the cut edges with seam sealer or seaming cement, failure should not occur in normal use and may only occur if, for example, the seam is subjected to abnormal use, for example, being clawed at by a pet. ■

NICF members can obtain guidance on any of these issues via the NICF office.



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